A JUNIOR HIGH TEACHING UNIT:
RUSSIA AND THE FORMER SOVIET REPUBLICS

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INTRODUCTION

The 1991 breakup of the Soviet Union was welcomed by most of the world as the end of the Cold War and the beginning of a New World Order. Newly elected Russian President Boris Yeltsin promised to quickly transform the once feared communist nation into a full democracy with a free-market economy.

However, the great promise and optimism of 1991 and 1992 has quickly faded as Russia struggles to carry out what is, for all practical purposes, an unprecedented Triple Revolution. First, it must make the transition from a command economy to a market economy. Second, it must go from authoritarian rule to a democratic government. Third, it must make the adjustment from imperial power to a nation state.[1]

A multitude of issues could be discussed in relation to the current situation in Russia, most of which could be analyzed in great detail. However, the purpose of this paper is to simply identify some of the more important issues related to the three most immediate and pervasive transitions the country must address. This paper is not meant to be a dissertation. Instead, it offers a broad discourse of information in an effort to provide an extensive background for creating a junior high-level teaching unit on Russia and the former Soviet republics. Issues will be analyzed in varying levels of detail in

order to better understand the problems the region faces in making the transitions in question and the current issues related to them.

In one way or another, all current issues in Russia are related to one or more of the three transitions. Furthermore, each of the individual revolutions in many ways is dependent upon the outcomes of the others. Therefore, in order to make any one of these changes successfully, Russia must, in effect, complete all three in concert. The challenge it faces is tremendous and, perhaps, insurmountable.

Command Economy to Market Economy

Russia's attempt to make the transition from a command economy to a free-market system has no historical precedent. Several countries in Eastern Europe are attempting similar transformations, but none come close to the scale of what must be carried out in Russia. For more than 70 years the Russian people have known nothing but complete dependency on the state. Now, they must construct an entirely new system from the ground up.

What Needs To Be Done?

There was little in the remnants of the Soviet command system to aid Russia's transition to capitalism. Under the Soviet system, central planning committees made all decisions pertaining to production and distribution in

both industry and agriculture. The influence of political forces in making most economic decisions prevented free-market forces from functioning and has resulted in many of the problems that plague Russia's efforts to create a market economy today. Given the complete breakdown and failure of the communist system, Russia has been forced to take several drastic steps simultaneously to implant a free-market system within the ruins of the old system.[2]

Privatization of Russian shops, businesses, industries, agriculture, and other enterprises is the first and most important step toward creating a free-market economy. Privatization is necessary to create market competition and encourage entrepreneurship, both of which will help ensure the production of sufficient amounts of consumer goods at realistic prices. The introduction of competition is the only way to make industry responsive to the needs of Russian consumers, but it will be difficult given the monopolistic legacy of the Soviet system.[3]

During the 1930s, the Soviet Union's agricultural resources were collectivized into large state-owned farms and industries were organized into huge enterprises, many of which became the single producers of certain products. In 1990, an estimated 2,000 enterprises in the former Soviet Union were the sole manufacturers of specific products. Locomotive cranes, sewing machines, tram rails, cooking equipment, and other products were manufactured by one individual company.[4]

The monopolization of key industries led to severe inefficiencies in pro-

duction. Planners paid no attention to market signals indicating the wants and needs of consumers. Chronic shortages of consumer goods were common. At the same time, the emphasis on quantity rather than quality resulted in the production of inferior goods.[5]

Most state industries eventually became a drain on the economy, but government subsidies kept even the most non-productive enterprises operating. Industrial managers were provided raw materials by the state at no cost, so they had little concern for waste or infefficiency.[6]

Russian workers were left out of the planning process and had no forum to offer suggestions for improving production. Having no real stake in their own productivity, laborers lacked any incentive to work hard. Many factories essentially were agencies of social welfare, maintaining unnecessarily large work forces and promoting mass underemployment. A favorite and painfully accurate saying of many Soviet workers was "We pretend to work, and they pretend to pay us."[7] The recreation of a Russian work ethic is a major challenge for any economic reform.

Even if privatization can be accomplished, Russia must still overcome its chronic inexperience with free-market operations. Many Russian business owners today are highly trained but lack a technical understanding of how to effectively operate and manage a private enterprise.[8] Successful privatization is the key needed to give Russian people a stake in their own futures and to develop their individual initiatives to succeed.

Another challenge facing Russia in its attempt to build a free-market

system is the creation of capital, which is vital for economic development and growth. Under the Soviet system, government planning committees allocated money, raw materials, and other forms of capital to different regions of the USSR. Investment allocations reflected the state's agenda in terms of economic and political priorities instead of market forces.[9] Even unsuccessful industries were heavily subsidized by the state, thus relieving managers of any responsibility for raising their own capital.

Without the state to provide capital investment, fledgling Russian firms must look to new ways to raise their own. Russian enterprises must *attract* foreign investors, as well as persuade their own people to invest in the nation's economic recovery. Given the economic hardships suffered by most Russian people in recent years, trying to convince the masses to risk what little money they have by investing it in the country's fragile new businesses may be futile.

Moreover, Russia continues to lack many of the basic economic and political institutions needed for a free-market system to function. Economic institutions — such as a free banking system, stock exchanges, and a system of social security — were not part of the country's command system, nor were they needed, according to communist leaders.

Currently, no viable legal infrastructure exists in Russia to support the operation of a capitalist system. There is no tax system or any method for checking tax payments, except for state enterprises and institutions.[10] No laws for establishing contracts, declaring bankruptcies, or settling disputes

between private companies exist in Russia.[11] Procedures and laws pertaining to the establishment of property rights remain vague even in the midst of increasing privatization.[12]

The creation of a more favorable climate for business remains a top priority for the Russian government. "Only when businesses can calculate risk, profit, prices, and so on and be assured of their property rights, will they invest in a volume and manner likely to have significant impact.[13]

Furthermore, hazy boundaries between legal and illegal business have allowed organized crime to infiltrate many aspects of the economy. By 1993, the Russian "Mafiya" was believed to control over 40 percent of all turnover in goods and services in the country.[14]

The lack of a stable and exchangeable currency also has contributed to slowed economic growth in Russia. Soviet monetary policy destroyed the value of the ruble by allowing the routine printing additional money to subsidize failing state industries. Since 1991, the Central Bank has continued this practice in order to preserve the remaining large state industries and to prevent massive unemployment. The result has been hyperinflation. For many citizens, the ruble has become useless for conversion into goods, replaced by barter as the main method of trading.[15]

A market economy requires a widely accepted medium of exchange that can purchase goods and services on the domestic market and that is easily converted into foreign currency at free-market rates. The latter is especially vital for the incorporation of Russia into the international economy. Govern-

ment mismanagement of the money supply has made the ruble virtuall worthless. To reverse this trend, Russia must take steps to reduce inflation and work to establish an unregulated banking system of competitive note issue.[16]

How To Do It

Much debate surrounds how various free-market reforms should be carried out in Russia. Two basic approaches have been suggested. The first is been called "shock therapy" and has been used in Russia since 1992. A second and more conservative approach has been offered recently in light of the problems associated with shock therapy. The advantages and disadvantages both approaches have fueled controversy since Russia began its transformation to capitalism.

Shock therapy refers to the creation of a capitalist system through rapid privatization, price liberalization, and anti-inflationary "tight" money.[17] In 1992, shock therapy was introduced in Russia by Boris Yeltsin's former Prime Minister Yegor Gaidar, with the blessings of several leading Western economists, including Jeffrey Sachs of Harvard.[18] Despite the enormous political and social aftershocks which have accompanied radical economic reforms in Russia, shock therapy has been advocated by many Russian and foreign economists for a number of reasons.

First, the transition to capitalism involves many distinct and complex

reforms. Price liberalization, privatization, monetary reform, and the creation of working institutions cannot be introduced gradually through a piece- meal approach because all are interconnected. Therefore, radical and complete transformation remains the only viable approach.[19]

Second, the drastic approach characterized by shock therapy is considered necessary by some, who believe the old economic structures must be entirely abandoned in order to achieve a complete break with the old and, largely discredited, regime. Supporters of such extreme measures argue that gradual reform only allows the old bureaucracy to maintain its influence, slowing or obstructing further changes.[20]

Third, advocates of shock therapy contend that the corruption of the industrial bureaucracy and the inefficiency of state enterprises can only be changed by subjecting them to the harsh realities of the free market. Market competition is needed to force industries to make efficient use of their labor and capital resources, and to be more attentive to the needs of the consumers.[21]

Supporters of radical reform point to the successes of shock therapy in transforming Poland's economy. In 1990, that nation's first post-communist government introduced a radical economic reform program. As in Russia, the application of shock therapy initially caused continued economic hardships for most Polish people. After three years, however, reliable economic indicators show Poland's reforms may be working.[22]

Within months, radical reforms brought an end to lines and shortages in

most parts of Poland. In addition, a stabilization program ended hyperinflation, bringing the inflation rate down to about 3 percent per month by mid-1990.[23] Despite a 30 percent reduction in productivity and declining standards of living, each of Poland's succeeding governments managed to maintain the basic reform program. Industrial production has risen, and private enterprises have created 2 million new jobs in industry and commerce.[24]

Industrial production increased more than 13 percent during 1992. The rise in production was accompanied by a boom of export trade that has allowed Poland to afford many different products — including automobiles, a variety of electronic equipment, and other consumer goods.[25] Individual consumption also has risen, as evidenced by the increasing proportion of Polish households with modern appliances, such as refrigerators, televisions, and video cassette recorders.[26]

Perhaps the most impressive statistics include those demonstrating Poland's success in selling its goods on the world market, mostly in Western Europe. Its convertible currency exports rose from less than $8 billion in 1989 to about $14 billion in 1992. Western aid has played an integral role in Poland's success. Western nations committed $1 billion in initial assistance, which helped to stabilize Polish currency (the zloty). In 1991, the West agreed to help Poland lower its huge external debt, on the condition that it be done in two gradual phases. Preconditions of this kind worked to ensure Poland would continue its reform program.[27]

According to shock therapy's supporters, the lesson to be learned from the Polish model is that the first stage of transformation may be rough and full of hardship, but eventually stabilization and growth will result.[28] If given time and timely Western support, they maintain shock therapy will have similar results in Russia.

Critics of shock therapy are quick to point out that the situation in Russia differs significantly from that in Poland. They argue Russia is faced by a greater number of and more critical barriers to radical transformation than its Polish counterpart. Poland's relatively small size and more homogeneous ethnic population aided reforms and less of the country's farmland had been collectivized.[29]

Russia, on the other hand, must contend with a number of regional and ethnic struggles, as well as the continued presence of a huge military industrial complex, the lingering influence of the disbanded Communist Party, and a multi-ethnic population spread out over a huge geographic area. Furthermore, Russia's political arena is much more complex than that of Poland, and the Russian people have 20 more years of the communist experience.[30]

Other detractors of shock therapy maintain the approach has been used primarily to create quick economic progress in developing nations, such as Chile and Bolivia, in order to help them pay their debts to Western countries. A similar plan would have less application to Russia, given its unique economic and political circumstances. Critics further point out that shock therapy reforms were forced on the Russian people, without allowing oppor-

tunity for debate or consideration.[31]

While most opponents of radical economic reform do not advocate a return to a command system, they do agree that reforms in Russia must be more gradual and include a greater degree of state control in order to be successful. New Prime Minister Viktor Chernomydrin is searching for new policies to reverse the effects of shock therapy. Some of Russia's leading economists, many of whom are long-time opponents of shock therapy, reportedly are developing a new plan for economic revival.[32]

The basic thrust of the new plan is to actively use government to aid industrial recovery and innovation, while stimulating business activity and new investment through a mixture of tax incentives and direct public investment.[33] Details of the new approach to reform are not clear, but Chernomydrin's supporters expect a more pragmatic, if not slower, continuation of Russia's reforms.[34]

The main criticism of the more gradual approach is that it will try to rebuild the Russian economy by concentrating on the recovery of key industries, which will then serve as the engines of growth for the rest of the economy. The idea is not a new one. It was a basic component of Perestroika, which failed miserably.[35]

Opponents of gradual reform insist that basing Russia's economic recovery on the restructuring of existing enterprises will wipe out the country's growing private sector and deprive consumers of new manufacturers, new services, and imports. Additionally, they maintain the government would

need to provide further subsidies to keep these industries afloat, thus increasing inflation.36

Progress of Economic Reforms To Date

Although adequate current statistical information concerning the state of the Russian economy is not yet available, some recent figures shed light on the developments which have occurred since the institution of radical reforms in 1992.

True to form, shock therapy has been accompanied by great economic hardships for most Russian people. Since 1992, price liberalization has caused prices of consumer goods to skyrocket. Although more basic goods are becoming available, soaring prices have made many of them, such as clothes and shoes, nearly inaccessible for most consumers.37

In 1992, prices rose on an average of 15 to 30 percent per month.38 The greatest increases occurred in the food industry.39 Some Russians spend up to 90 percent of their incomes simply for food![40]

Citizens' deposits in savings banks have lost their value, in essence, being confiscated by the state and no longer serving even as a buffer to financial strain. According to the Ministry of Social Security, an estimated 20 percent of the population — some 30 million people — are living below the poverty level.[41] An effective social safety net for them, in the form of social security or related institutions, has yet to be implemented to help cushion the

blow of radical reform. On the average, living standards fell for all Russians by 50 percent at the end of 1992.[42]

An increase in fuel prices in May 1993 accelerated the rise in retail prices, worsened the financial situation of enterprise, and has contributed to rising unemployment.[43] During the same year, the volume in physical terms of production continued to fall for both foodstuffs and non-food products. Production fell by at least 40 percent.[44] The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Russia fell by more than 30 percent during 1992 and 1993,[45] while the national debt for the latter year was estimated at about 30 percent of the GDP.[46]

Further indicating the instability of the Russian economy, capital investment fell by 45 percent in 1992 and continued to decline in 1993.[47] Russia's volatile economic climate has spawned "capital flight," as illegal sales of raw materials deprive the country of valuable resources. The profits from many legal and illegal enterprises are increasingly ending up in Western banks, where the money is safe and collects interest. This drain of capital has left Russian industries with little money to overhaul existing industrial equipment or to buy new machinery. In 1992 alone, an estimated $4 to $15 billion of potential capital investment were channeled elsewhere.[48]

Very little current information is available concerning the extent of foreign investment in Russia. In 1987, the Soviet government legalized the formation of joint ventures between Soviet and foreign firms, and they became the most popular form of foreign investment in Russia.[49]

At the start of 1991, an estimated 2,900 joint ventures were registered in the former Soviet Union, but only 1,604 of them were actually operating by August of that year. Of the joint ventures involving member countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), 83 percent were operating in Russia, accounting for 72.2 percent of CIS foreign trade.[50] By the end of 1991, however, the total stock of foreign investment in the entire former Soviet Union was equivalent to less than 0.1 percent of the Soviet gross national product.[51]

Privatization has been the most successful aspect of the shock therapy program in Russia. A state privatization program was created and implemented in 1992.[52] The first small enterprises, such as shops and garages, were auctioned in the summer of 1992. By the end of 1993, almost all shops, restaurants, workshops, and other small operations had been privatized in many areas of the country. Privatization has taken place in 82 of Russia's 88 regions and republics.[53]

The privatization of Russia's larger industries began in January 1993 and has progressed much more slowly. In October 1992, the government began to issue 10,000-ruble vouchers to every citizen for the purchase of shares in firms and other state-owned property.[54] In 1993, 8,010 middle-sized and large enterprises were privatized, employing 8.3 million workers. This figure indicates that just over two-fifths of Russia's manufacturing work force is employed by a private company.[55] In all, an estimated 100,000 or more state companies have been privatized, accounting for more than 50 percent

of the GDP.[56]

Privatization of agriculture has been less successful. In October 1992, the government ordered collective farms to sell plots to anyone who wanted to farm privately.[57] By 1993, statistics revealed that privatization of agriculture had taken a number of different forms. About 4,500 collectives decided to maintain their own enterprise status, while more than 300 open-type joint stock companies were formed. Also, 3,800 limited liability and mixed partnerships were created, along with 608 agricultural cooperatives.[58]

The establishment of private peasant farms has been limited by shortages of equipment, material-technical resources, and financial assets. Additionally, limited opportunities to acquire feed and young animals have kept livestock farming from becoming broadly developed.[59]

Despite gloomy reports from the first two years of reform, more recent indications reveal the Russian economy is beginning to improve. Some authorities now are claiming that previous data failed to accurately assess the size of the new emerging market economy and underestimations were made. Recent indicators show inflation has fallen from 800 percent a year ago to around 100 percent.[60] Meanwhile, foreign companies invested about $1 billion in 1993 by buying shares in privatized firms. Optimistic Russian officials believe this figure will increase significantly in the near future.[61]

Prime Minister Chernomydrin has recently announced his plans to seek legislation granting foreign investors a five-year exemption from paying taxes on profits, removing tariffs on imports of materials for joint ventures, and

permitting foreigners to buy the land on which they operate their businesses. The implementation of any one of these measures would be a significant concession on the part of the government to spur investment.[62]

Wrongly or rightly so, many Russians have associated the hardships of economic reforms with Yeltsin's shock therapy approach. Given the legacy of the communist economic system, it is likely any plan of reform would have been accompanied by similar adversity. While it is clear that Yeltsin is distancing himself from more radical reforms, his new direction, its anticipated results, and how effective it will be have yet to be realized.

Imperial Power to Nation-State

The second major transformation that Russia must undergo is switching from a multi-ethnic empire to a nation-state. Russia's future will be largely dependent on its ability to establish new economic and political relationships with the former republics, while maintaining regional stability in the face of escalating ethnic conflict and intense nationalism.

The Communist Legacy

The Soviet Union's centrally planned economy was developed in such a way that the republics and semi-autonomous regions within the Russian Federation found it impossible to function on their own outside of its frame-

work. Industries were concentrated in one location and made dependent upon raw materials from a number of different republics.[63]

In terms of trade, the Soviet republics were virtually isolated from the outside world, trading almost exclusively among themselves. One exception was the Soviet government's export of energy resources, which it used to gain hard currency for the purchase technology from the west.[64]

Interdependence was the rule of the system. Most republics depended heavily on Russia for their energy resources. In 1990, Russia produced 90 percent of the Soviet Union's oil, almost 80 percent of its natural gas, and 56 percent of its coal. Russia also produced 91 percent of the union's timber, 85 percent of its paper, and 72 percent of its cotton cloth.[65]

Likewise, the Russian Republic depended heavily on inter-republican trade to support its own economy. Today, it has been estimated that, if Russia cut all ties with the former republics and the rest of the world, it would only be able to produce 65 percent of its current gross output.[66]

Perhaps the most potentially destructive legacy of communist rule is the nation's ethnic structure. The Soviet Union was made up of well over 100 different ethnic groups, divided among 15 republics and autonomous regions within the Russian Federation itself. The larger republics were loosely based on the main ethnic group in each, although each republic contained varying populations of several different groups.

By turning ethnic identity of all groups into official nationalities with a clearly defined territorial dimension, Soviet leaders set the stage for future

ethnic conflicts and nationalist expression. The communists also staged migrations of whole groups across the Soviet Union to create minorities, who would depend on Moscow for protection and support further justifying Soviet control over the empire.[67]

The re-emergence of nationalism in the former republics, long supressed by the communists, was one of the main ingredients in the collapse of the Soviet empire. Beginning in 1989, the Soviet Army became unable to contain ethnic tensions. Since then, disputes over borders and conflicting territorial claims have erupted into civil wars in Azerbaijan, Tajikistan, and Georgia. Separatist movements by smaller ethnic groups within Russia and several of the newly independent states further threaten the region's stability.[68]

Issues and Interests In The Near Abroad

Russia continues to have vital economic and political interests in the former republics. The collapse of the Soviet Union inspired the former republics to try to distance themselves, both politically and economically, from Russia, most visibly by initially attempting to carve out their own independent development strategies. Most leaders of the republics had long been convinced that Moscow intentionally limited regional progress for its own benefit. Only the weakest states, like Kyrgyzstan, continued to look to Moscow for help after the union's dissolutuion.[69]

The breakup of the Soviet Union, however, had disastrous consequences

for the economies of all the former republics. The collapse of already weakened industry was accelerated as factories were cut off from both suppliers and regular customers, disrupting the flow of goods and causing the departure of trained personnel. Several republics erected trade barriers further limiting the flow of goods and services. Trade between the former fellow republics dropped off drastically[70] and the severing of economic ties resulted in a decline of nearly 50 percent in Russia's net exports.[71]

Continued economic hardships in the successor states since independence have caused some to change their minds about maintaining their defiance of Moscow. Recently, election results in both Belarus and Ukraine reflected the desire of those two nations to move toward closer relations desire of those two nations to move toward closer relations with Russia.[72]

Meanwhile, Russia continues to aggressively pursue its own economic interests in the region. These interests include access to ports, transportation, communications, and manufacturing plants where production has not yet been matched by Russian factories.[73] Russia has considerable interests in maintaining access to key natural resources, particularly oil and natural gas reserves in Central Asia and the Caucasus. The Russian government also has exerted pressure to get shares in joint ventures for oil production in Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan.[74]

Russia's political interests in the near abroad center around its need to deal with increasing regional instability caused, primarily, by ethnic violence. Russia must try to find solutions to the continuing ethnic disputes and other

conflicts in its near abroad, lest this turmoil negatively affect its own efforts to develop new economic and political institutions.

Thus far, Russian efforts to mediate ethnic conflicts have been biased and subject to lobbying from ethnic-centered communities within the Russian Federation.[75] The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) has been largely ineffective at such mediation for the simple reason that none of the involved countries has been willing to cede the sovereignty that accepting Russian arbitration implies, since Russia is the dominant member of the CIS.

In the case of the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute, for example, Azerbaijan — which is not a full CIS member — was reluctant to accept CIS mediation because the Russians have traditionally been pro-Armenian.[76]

Few plausible solutions exist to the problems in Russia's near abroad. Suggestions have included revising the borders of the former republics or even conducting mass migrations of different ethnic groups while keeping the borders intact. Neither one of these solutions is viable, however, given the diversity and distribution of members of different groups. The most promising solution on the table thus far would require guarantees by the republics to respect the rights of ethnic minorities within their borders, including the right to cultural and territorial autonomy.[77]

In the absence of any real solution to ethnic instability, the responsibility of keeping order in the former republics has fallen squarely on the shoulders of Russia, since it is the only nation strong enough to carry the burden. In some places, like the Central Asian republics, Russian soldiers are officially

accepted as part of a standing mutual defense pact of the CIS.[78] Russia still has an estimated 150,000 troops distributed in 10 of the former republics.[79] In Tajikistan, Azerbaijan, and Georgia, Russian leaders have justified the presence of these troops as "peacekeepers," but widespread accusations charge that Russian units have been actively supporting one side or the other in ethnic conflicts there.[80]

Some authorities have even pointed to the increasing Russian military presence in the republics as a sign of Russia's neo-imperialist intentions; however, it has substantial cause for actively working to maintain peace and stability in the near abroad. Violence in bordering nations could easily spill over into Russian territory, making it necessary for Russia to intervene later on a massive scale.[81] More importantly, the government could not afford a mass influx of refugees that would accompany any significant turmoil. Those displaced would only place additional stress on the already floundering economy and possibly increase the numbers of those opposing further free-market and democratic reforms.[82] In 1993, over 2 million refugees poured across Russia's borders.[83] Among them were many ethnic Russians.

The 25 million ethnic Russians living in the former republics continue to be a great concern for the government. Most of these people moved to or were moved by the Soviet government to different parts of the empire in order to provide skilled labor for industry or to help "Russify" the local cultures.[84]

With the breakup of the Soviet Union, these ethnic Russians suddenly

found themselves living in foreign countries, where they faced resentment, discrimination, and physical danger due to increasing violence and turmoil.[85] Thousands of them have already migrated back to Russia.[86]

The plight of ethnic Russians in the near abroad has also served to generate political troubles at home, as public anger concerning the treatment of Russians abroad has provided welcomed ammunition for the nation's extreme nationalist politicians. The need to protect "fellow Russians" has been used by nationalists to justify their call for the re-establishment of Russian dominance over the former republics, a change from which an increasing number of Russians have come to blame for Russia's own problems.[87]

Such sentiment has forced Yeltsin's government to focus more attention on these issues, as evidenced by his current hardline stance in regard to the withdrawal of Russian troops from Estonia.[88] As large numbers of Russians continue to migrate back to Russia, it's possible that Russia's stake in the neighboring republics will diminish; but the greatest threat to stability may come from those ethnic Russians who choose to stay where they are.[89]

The majority of ethnic Russians living outside of the Russian Federation are concentrated in contiguous regions in eastern Ukraine and northern Kazakhstan. Russians make up nearly 25 percent of the Ukraine's population. In Kazakhstan, they constitute almost half of the total population. Significant populations of ethic Russians also exist in Crimea and the Baltic States.[90]

The Russian government has actively discouraged any separatist inten-

tions by these groups, demanding instead only that their basic rights be respected.[91] Nevertheless, the danger exists that separatist groups could begin to demand their own right to self-determination, independent of any sponsorship from Moscow. Some authorities have referred to such a scenerio as the "Texas Solution," in which a popular rebellion by ethnic Russians would lead to the region's annexation by Russia.[92]

Similar separatist rumblings have recently come from the Baltic States. In July 1993, local authorities in Narva and Sillanae in northeast Estonia conducted a referendum on whether the region should become autonomous. Ninety-eight percent of those voting — just over half the local population — cast their ballots in favor of autonomy. The Estonian government called the vote unconstitutional,[93] but separatist feelings remain in Estonia and several other countries where they pose a threat to the stability of Russia and the entire region.

The presence of significant numbers of non-Russians within the borders of the Russian Federation poses yet another threat to the nation's stability. Under communist rule, the political organization of the Russian Republic was similar to that of the Union. Although more than 80% of the Russian Federation was inhabited by ethnic Russians, there were twenty-one republics within its borders each named for a specific non-Russian nationality or nationalities. In only five of these was the majority of the population made up of non-Russians.[94] In addition, there were many other smaller semi-autonomous regions also based on ethnicity.

When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, some feared that the Russian Federation itself might soon further disintegrate as a number of regions and republics expressed their desire to gain their political and economic independence from Moscow. In November 1991, the Republic of Chechnya, located in the foothills of the Caucasus Mountains, declared itself no longer a part of the Russian Federation. Likewise, the Republics of Tatarstan and Tyva, as well as the Sverdlovsk Oblast — which has declared itself the Urals Republic — have openly expressed their determination to gain more autonomy.[95]

Despite the frequent separatist rumblings from different parts of the Russian Federation, the dangers of any widespread disintegration have receded in recent years. The main factors that prevents many republics and autonomous regions from seeking complete independence are economic. Within the various republics and regions, there exists a great disparity as regards to geographical size, ethnic mix, availability of valuable resources, and standard of living. The republics with the greatest percentages of non-Russians tend to be those which are least suited to make it on their own economically should they become completely independent from Moscow.[96]

In some cases, the Russian government has used this economic leverage to maintain its influence over former republics and regions. The ethnic republic of Tatarstan, whose leaders have long pushed for increased autonomy, recently signed a new power-sharing treaty with the Russian Federation.[97]

Tatarstan's efforts to gain full independence were hampered by its dependence on raw material imports, especially refined oil products, from other

parts of the Russian Federation. At one point, Moscow threatened to shut off the pipelines that link Tatarstan, via Russia, to the outside world.[98] Given its extensive natural resources and industrial base, Russia has the ability to exert similar pressures on other neighbors.

Future Relations

A fear prevails that Russia's active pursuit of its economic and political interests could be a sign of its desire to regain control over its former empire. However, any efforts to do so, by either economic pressures or in the extreme case military force, would be tragically counterproductive for Russia.

The strength of nationalist pride in the newly independent countries would make them unlikely to peacefully submit again to Russia's control. Russian moves to restore the empire most probably would result in war, which would finish off the Russian economy and lead to unprecedented bloodshed and complete chaos. Furthermore, renewed tensions could cause the different republics to build their militaries, seek nuclear weapons, and court allies, thereby dotting Russia's immense borders with hostile neighbors.[99]

The more plausible scenario is that Russia will try to develop a "sphere of influence" which includes the former republics but does not involve the political, economic, and ideological domination that was part of Soviet rule. This sphere of influence is likely to include a variety of relationships, given

the diverse political and economic status of the various former republics.[100]

Each relationship would present a different political, economic, ethnic, and military situation in which Russia's relative advantage would also vary.[101] Exactly what those relationships will be is nearly impossible to pin down, given the continued turmoil in several of the successor states. Some have suggested that Russia needs to turn inward and concentrate on its own economic and political development. The legacy of communism, however, has left Russia with the remnants of a economic system based on interdependence that will require it to maintain its interests in the former republics for some time to come. In addition, Russia continues to be burdened with a number of potentially explosive situations in its near abroad that cannot be ignored. External developments will continue to play an important part in influencing the progress of Russian reforms.

Authoritarianism to Democracy

Perhaps the most challenging of Russia's three transitions will be the move from authoritarian rule to a democratic form of government. Democracy is a complex system which, to function properly, must be supported by a broad base of cultural values and democratic institutions.[102] All modern democracies have been developed slowly, institution by institution, over long periods of time. Russia has been expected to make its transformation virtually overnight.

Russia's Authoritarian Tradition

History has shown that democracy is not easily planted in new places.[103] The task has been especially difficult in Russia, where the people lack any real traditions of democratic government. Russia has taken several steps in moving toward democratic rule, including the adaptation of a new constitution in December 1993. Meanwhile, popular elections for the presidency, parliament, and local positions have given the Russian people their first experiences with the democratic process. However, some signs indicate Russia may soon be moving backward, in the direction of authoritarian rule.

Such a reversal should not be entirely surprising, given Russia's prerevolutionary and communist political culture. Its people have always lived in a society in which the state monopolized every activity. Nothing resembling a democratic civil society has ever existed in Russia. To rule, Russian leaders have traditionally capitalized upon the people's lack of initiative.[104]

The creation of a new constitution is not very reassuring to those who point out the fact that both Russia and the Soviet Union have had some very democratic constitutions during the course of their histories. The problem is no ruler has ever really followed these constitutions.[105]

The majority of the Russian people have yet to fully demonstrate an acceptance of the democratic process and a willingness to become actively and constructively involved in it. The disastrous state of the economy has

been especially damaging to the legitimacy of the new democratic rule.[106] In some cities and regions, recent local elections were declared void because of low voter turnout. Reports also circulated that election results in several locations were altered, further weakening people's trust in the fairness of the system.[107]

Leaders, likewise, remain non-committal in their willingness to make sincere efforts toward the development of institutions essential to initiate new democratic traditions. Russian President Boris Yeltsin's actions have distanced him little from the authoritarianism that characterized Russia's past rulers.

In 1993, Yeltsin used military force to overthrow the elected parliament and the constitutional system previously presented to the Russian people as the legitimate post- communist order.[108] This turn of events has been cited as the most obvious example of Yeltsin's willingness to consolidate his power through the use of force and revealed an unsettling dependence on the army.[109]

In addition, the president's decrees have dissolved the parliament and suspended what was the highest legal body in the land — the Constitutional Court. He has largely dismantled the system of local governments by doing away with the so-called soviets and dismissing provisional governors who disobeyed his orders, even though some had been popularly elected.[110]

Yeltsin also has authorized the organization of a new ministry for the purpose of combatting "anti-constitutional" activities. Similar organizations

exist in Germany and some other democratic nations, but Russians may take little comfort in this fact since their new ministry is to be organized largely by former KGB leaders.[111] Some have taken this and other actions as an indication that the re-establishment of a police state has already begun.[112]

The new Russian Constitution gives the president more powers than that of any other Western democracy.[113] Given Yeltsin's record of authoritarianism, however, some warn it would be a mistake to think his extensive new powers will be used to accelerate political and democratic reforms.[114] In fact, the defeat of reformist forces in the December 1993 elections has lessened the president's enthusiasm for reform. Instead, he apparently is trying to avoid any serious political upheavals that could emerge in the wake of mass unemployment which may accompany reforms.[115] This stance is clearly indicated by Yeltsin's replacement of shock therapy Prime Minister Yegor Gaidar with Chernomydrin, a supporter of more gradual and state-controlled reforms.[116]

Given the current economic and social chaos, a period of authoritarian rule indeed may be needed to get reforms ontrack. But there is no guarantee, particularly in light of Yeltsin's recent actions and Russia's traditions ofgovernment, that once started on this course, authoritarian rule would be short-lived or temporary.

Barriers To Democracy

Critical in the long run may be the fact that Russia continues to lack the permanent institutions needed to create and sustain a democratic system of government. The struggle for power between the executive and legislative branches during the past two years has detracted from the government's development of proper foundations for democratic growth.[117]

The adoption of a new constitution was seen by many as a major step toward democracy. Modeled mainly after the constitutions of France and the United States, it guarantees individual freedoms and includes a division of powers by allowing the new Federal Assembly to serve as both a partner and a check on the power of the executive branch.[118]

However, the new constitution contains several controversial provisions that could cause conflicts in the near future.[119] Most significantly, the executive branch has been given some law-making powers in addition to those of the legislative branch, thus blurring the separation of powers. Such a setup will likely lead to a continuation of the war of laws between the executive and legislative branches that has characterized the early days of Russian democracy.[120]

The creation of a legitimate parliament is a key step on the road to democratic government. The parliament must be one that is aware of the concerns of the population and also is a partner in the reform process in order to prevent an estrangement between the Russian people and the Russian authorities.[121]

The recent announcement by the parliament of an amnesty for both the

leaders of the 1991 coup attempt and the 1993 disturbances is an example of the legislative body's willingness to challenge Yeltsin's power directly.[122] The new Federal Assembly's relationship with Yeltsin and its ability to assert itself without challenging the basics of reform will be critical to the development of Russian democracy.[123]

Political parties are needed to provide constructive opposition and mass support for certain ideas, yet the new constitution gives no explanation of the role of parties. Of the many political parties in Russia today, none has succeeded in establishing a regional base of support large enough to win elections. The fall of communism left Russia without a major, nationwide political organization. The new parties have yet to organize enough voter support to put any real direct pressure on the current government. Yeltin's own lack of a party has limited his ability to create mass support for his reforms.[124]

Furthermore, not enough time has elapsed for the development of any firm party discipline. Without such discipline, voters cannot be assured that leaders, once in office, will feel pressured to carry out their campaign promises.[125] Such a precarious relationship could cause a further decline in the people's faith in democratic norms and practices.

The media, another key player in a democratic system, have not yet become an influential ingredient in the Russian political process. In democratic systems, the media are supposed to serve as a "watchdog" of the state, providing unbiased reporting and applying pressure on the government

when its actions stray from the interests of the people.

In Russia today, the media continue to serve as a propaganda tool of the state. Many key journalists still see their jobs as providing support for one political force or another. The emergence of a independent and critical media has yet to occur.[126]

Even if Russia can surmount its authoritarian traditions long enough to build a working democracy, anti-democratic forces within the country continue to exist that may threaten further political and economic reforms. Discontent about the declining economic condition has greatly increased public support for group's offering more radical solutions to Russia's problems. Nationalist forces, some from the extreme right and others more moderate, have a viable chance to win support of the Russian people and take command of the country's political future.[127]

Neo-communist and nationalist parties did shockingly well in the 1993 December parliamentary elections, gaining considerable influence in the new Federal Assembly and further indicating that people have grown weary of reform. Just how much of this support was given in the form of a protest vote against Yeltsin and how much was sincere show of support for the extreme right is impossible to discern. Many experts, nevertheless, maintain the nationalist threat cannot be ignored.[128]

Of the many radical Red-Brown groups in Russia, the most visible of these opposition groups has been the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) led by the eccentric ultra-nationalist Vladimir Zhirinovsky. In the December 1993

parliamentary elections, the LDP won 25 percent of the vote. Zhirinovsky, initially portrayed as a buffoon, has skillfully used outrageous behavior and oratory to attract media attention. His simplistic and extremely vague solutions to Russia's problems have been refreshing to many people tired of hearing about the intricacies of free-market capitalism and democratic government.[129]

The LDP rejects both communist and democratic reform and uses them as scapegoats, thus positioning itself as a savior with no responsibility for past failures or current problems.[130] The LDP supports an economic program that in many ways resembles Adolph Hitler's national socialism. Racism and expansionism have been the weapons of choice in Zhirinovsky's battle to win the hearts and minds of the Russian people. The LDP has blamed many of Russia's current problems on minority groups and has promised to create an ethnically pure Russian state in an effort to end the threat of anarchy. Race also figures prominently in Zhirinovsky's foreign policy. LDP leaders speak of the yellowing, reddening, and blackening of the world's population and describe the threat it poses to the white race.[131]

This racist strategy has been specifically designed to unite Russia's people in a struggle against common "enemies" — the most prominent of thom being the United States, various racial groups, and the Jews. Zhirinovsky has proposed his own "final solution" to the Russian Jewish problem in which the emigration of Jews from Russia is accelerated and their influence over the country's economy and media are reduced. However, the

LDP's policy would not be so humane in dealing with Zionists.[132]

Most threatening to the outside world is Zhirinovsky's blatant expansionism. If given power, Zhirinovsky promised the return of a dictatorship to restore the nation's superpower status. He has called the creation of the CIS treaty "an act of treason" and has promised to restore Russia to its former glory within the frontiers of 1900. Not only does he advocate regaining the republics, but also taking Finland, Poland, and even Alaska! Zhirinovsky has also promised a "push to the south" to eliminate the growing Islamic threat from Russia's southern borders.[133]

The LDP's active recruitment of military support has been particularly well received among the ranks of enlisted men and lower ranking officers. Zhirinovsky has promised to restore the might and prestige of the Russian Army, an idea so appealing to the military that Yeltsin attributed one- third of its vote to the LDP.[134]

Since 1991, the Russian military has suffered from low morale, low pay, housing shortages, and a drastic reduction of funds for weapons. Some units in the former republics have had to become completely self-supporting. While the military currently continues to support Yeltsin, it remains an ominous figure in the Russian political picture.[135]

The greatest danger of the nationalists and other radicals may be that they are deflecting the energies of the nation from where they are most needed — coping with the real dangers and the immense work of reconstruction.[136] If economic and social conditions would suddenly take a turn for the

worse, Zhirinovsky could come to power in the 1996 elections. Although it is unclear exactly what he would do in such a position, many believe it would be disaster for Russia and possibly the rest of world.

Arguments Against A Return To Authoritarian Rule

Several factors serve to lessen the likelihood of any return to fascism or other forms of oppressive authoritarian rule in Russia. A certain nostalgia for a return to the strict order of communism does exist among many Russians. In general, however, Russians have displayed such a strong aversion to fascist rule that for them to submit to it again — at least when they are enjoying some degree of social, economic and political stability — seems improbable. Memories of Nazism and the destruction of World War II are still recent for enough Russians to forestall any widespread acceptance of fascism.[137]

More significantly, like the reformers, the extreme right is fragmented and has been weakened by bitter internal disputes and dissention.[138] The communists and anti- communist nationalists represent the main wings of the movement, but they are united only by their rejection of Yeltsin's reforms. They have major differences of opinion about both the meaning of Russian history and the proper model for the future. They have yet to progress beyond negativism to develop a coherent, workable agenda.[139]

The extremists, including the LDP, suffer from a lack of concrete pro-

grams or leaders, outside of Zhirinovsky, capable of gaining mass support. Even Zhirinovsky's popularity seems to be waning as the economy shows signs of leveling out and he continues to fail to capitalize on his earlier successes.

The future of democratic reforms in Russia will hinge heavily upon the outcome of the 1996 presidential elections. By concentrating power in the hands of the president, the Russian Constitution makes it possible for one leader to have a significant influence on determining the nation's policies.[140] Moreover, it will be necessary to overcome the nation's deep-rooted authoritarian traditions by working to create viable democratic institutions to ensure the creation of a democratic Russia.

CONCLUSION: The Challenges Of Triple Revolution

Given the tremendous challenges associated with each of the three revolutions described in this paper, it is no wonder that Russia has experienced significant problems and outright chaos in recent years. The great extent to which the different transformations are interdependent upon one another only makes it harder to fathom how Russia will manage to sufficiently accomplish any of them in the near future.

The possible scenarios are endless. Economic reforms could be reversed if the 1996 elections place Russia under the rule of a leader opposed to further change. In turn, progress toward the development of democratic

institutions could be limited if a worsening economic and social situation creates mass support for more Draconian solutions to Russia's problems. Moreover, the escalation of ethnic conflicts in the near abroad or civil war sparked by separatist movements could engulf Russia and the former republics in wars that would set back further economic and political reforms and possibly lead to bloodshed on a massive scale.

In studying Russia today, it is much easier to evaluate the effects of communist rule as they pertain to current problems and issues than it is to make any accurate assessment of the current economic or political situation. Two conflicting viewpoints surface with each of the three transitions mentioned. The more optimistic view implies that the main elements of a market economy and a democratic system have been introduced, political stability has been more or less achieved, and the future will include continued democratic reforms, even if they are conducted at a slower pace. The second, and more pessimistic, view holds that the reform process has been a complete failure and Russia is once again headed in the direction of a command economy and authoritarian rule. Given the current information available, both positions cannot be entirely substantiated.

The purpose of this paper has been to identify some of the more important challenges that face Russia in completing its triple transformation. Events related to them that have yet to fully unfold will determine Russia's course and along with it the world's.

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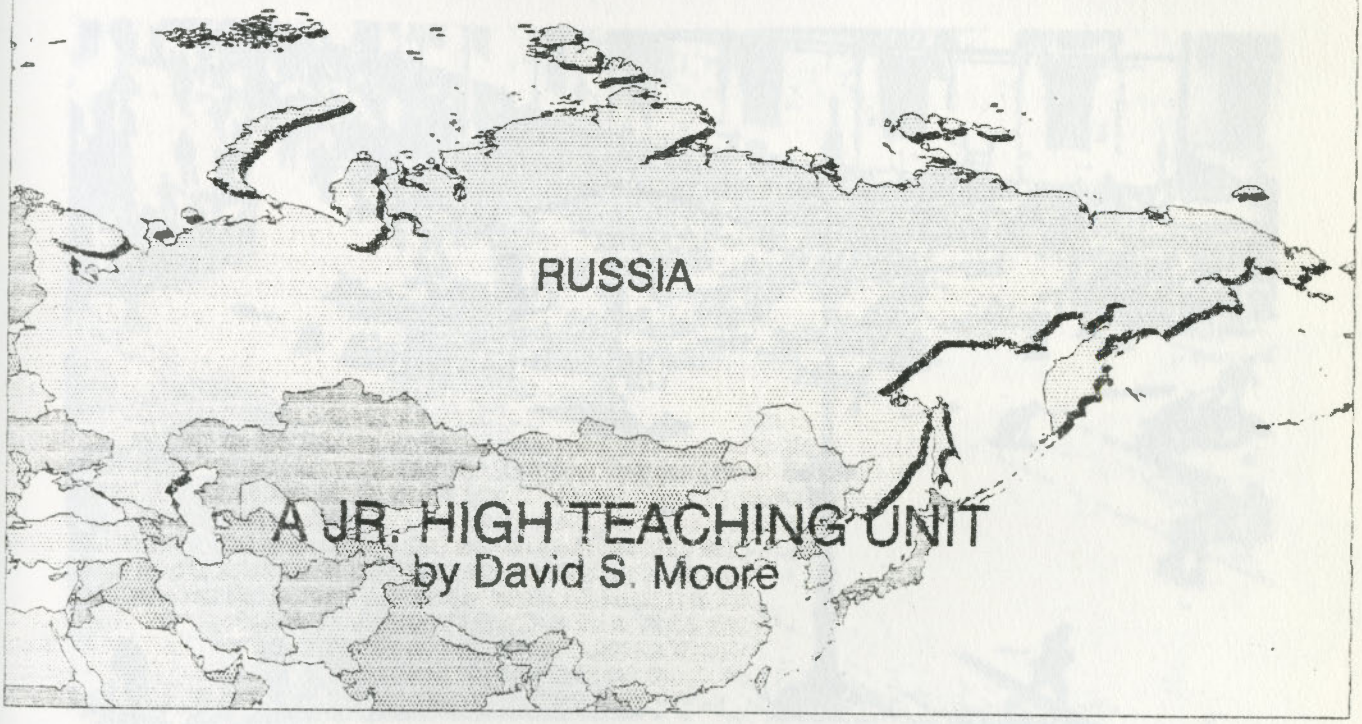
RUSSIA AND THE FORMER SOVIET REPUBLICS:



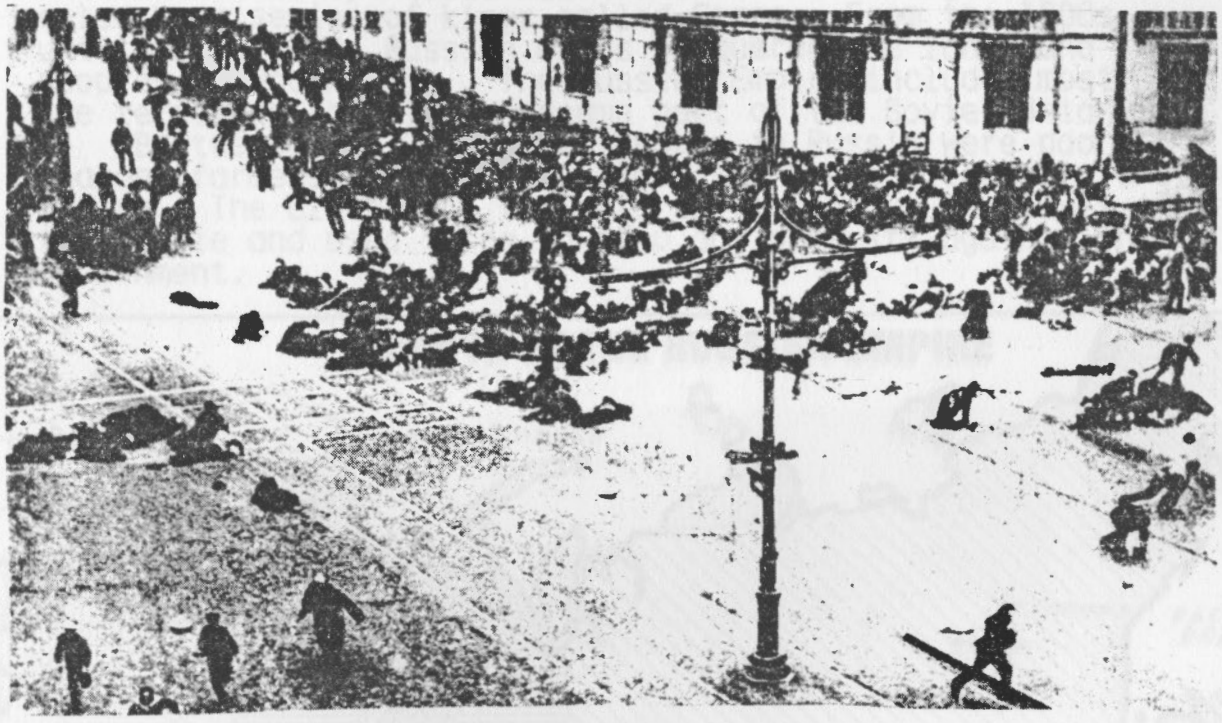
A JR. HIGH TEACHING UNIT

by David S. Moore

SECTION I — THE HISTORY

INTRODUCTION

In order to really understand the great changes that have taken place in Russia and the other countries in this region today, you will need to know about what has happened in the past. During this century (the 1900s), this region has been the scene of many important events that have shaped today's situation.



Fighting in the streets of St. Petersburg, Oct. 1917

VOCABULARY

allies	czars	ICBM	conventional weapons
peasant	reform	empire	nuclear weapons
communism	boycott	dictator	parliament

KEY PLACES/PEOPLE/EVENTS

Russian Empire	Russian Revolution	Bolsheviks
World Wars I & II	Vladimir Lenin	Joseph Stalin
Cold War	Soviet Union	Arms Race
Karl Marx	Mikhail Gorbachev	Reds/Whites
Cuban Missile Crisis		St. Petersburg

PRE-READING QUESTIONS

(1) How was the Soviet Union created?
(2) Why were more than 40 million Soviet people killed between 1930 and 1945?
(3) What was the Cold War? How did it threaten the safety of the whole world?

THE CZARS & THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE (1900-1914)

Before 1900, Russia was the center of a huge **empire** ruled by a series of kings called **Czars**. From the 1600s until about 1900, Russian Czars conquered the lands and peoples around Russia. The Russian Empire included most of the territory that later became part of the Soviet Union.

By the early 1900s, most people in Russia were poor **peasant** farmers. At the same time, the Czars lived a life of luxury. The Czars made few efforts to improve the lives of the people and used force to stop any protests against the government.

Russia's rulers slowly built a great emprie by conquering surrounding lands.

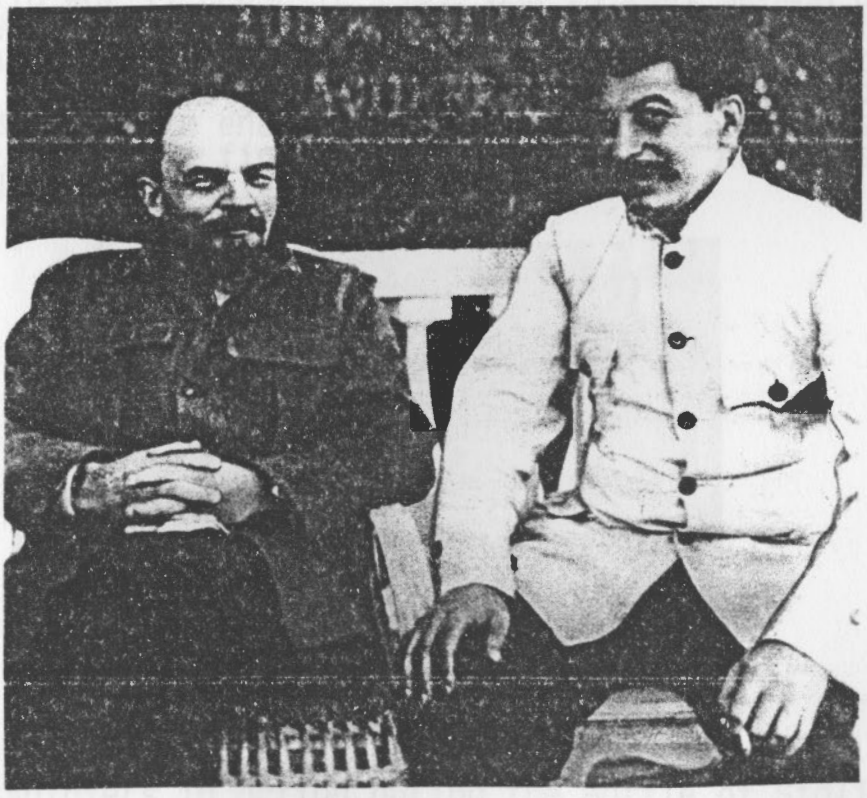
WORLD WAR & REVOLUTION (1914-1917)

In 1914, Russia entered **World War I** and fought against Germany. The Russian Army was badly beaten, and millions of Russian soldiers were killed in combat. Life in Russia became more and more unbearable as the war dragged on. By 1917, the Russian people had enough. Food shortages became more serious, and riots and mass protests broke out in St. Petersburg and other cities.

Russian soldiers in St. Petersburg refused orders to fire on the protestors. Unable to stop the growing unrest, Czar Nicholas II abdicated (quit) and was replaced by a group of leaders from the Duma, the Russian **parliament**. The new government decided to continue the war against Germany, but Russia continued to lose.

In November 1917, a small group of communist revolutionaries called the **Bolsheviks** took control of the government in St. Petersburg. The Bolsheviks were led by **Vladimir Lenin**. The Bolsheviks quickly made peace with the Germans and got Russia out of World War I.

Lenin had studied the writings of **Karl Marx**, a German who had first developed the idea of **communism**. Lenin wanted to create a country where the workers shared the nation's resources and received only what they needed to live. It was to be one of the greatest experiments in government the world had ever seen.



Lenin (left) and Stalin (right) were the first two rulers of the Soveit Union.

CIVIL WAR & THE SOVIET UNION (1918–1922)

Not everybody in Russia agreed with the Bolsheviks, who later renamed themselves the communists. From 1918 until 1921, a bitter civil war raged across the country as the communists (the **Reds**) fought to keep control of the government. They were opposed by the anti-communists (the **Whites**). Millions died in Russia during this war from famine and disease.

The Reds won the civil war and in 1922 declared the creation of a new country called the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). The **Soviet Union** was the world's first communist nation.

REIGN OF TERROR (1924–1939)

In 1924, Lenin died, and **Joseph Stalin** became the **dictator** of the Soviet Union. Stalin was one of the most cruel leaders ever to live. He used fear and violence to force people to follow communism. During the 1930s, an estimated 20 million Soviets were killed as part of Stalin's effort to get rid of anyone who might oppose him or try to overthrow him. Millions were sent to labor camps in Siberia or simply executed for the slightest of reasons, or for no reason at all.

WORLD WAR II (1939–1945)

World War II began in 1939, and in 1941 German dictator Adolph Hitler ordered his armies to invade Russia. The German Army came close to capturing Moscow, but eventually, the Red Army pushed the Germans back into Germany and captured Berlin to end the war. Over 20 million Russians were killed in the fighting, and much of the nation's farmland and industries were destroyed.

Russian soldiers in action during the Battle of Stalingrad in 1942.

World War II is the most remembered event in Russia's history. Most cities have huge monuments honoring those who died in what Russians call the "Great Patriotic War." Despite its heavy losses, the Soviet Union came out of the war, along with the United States, as one of the world's most powerful countries.

THE COLD WAR

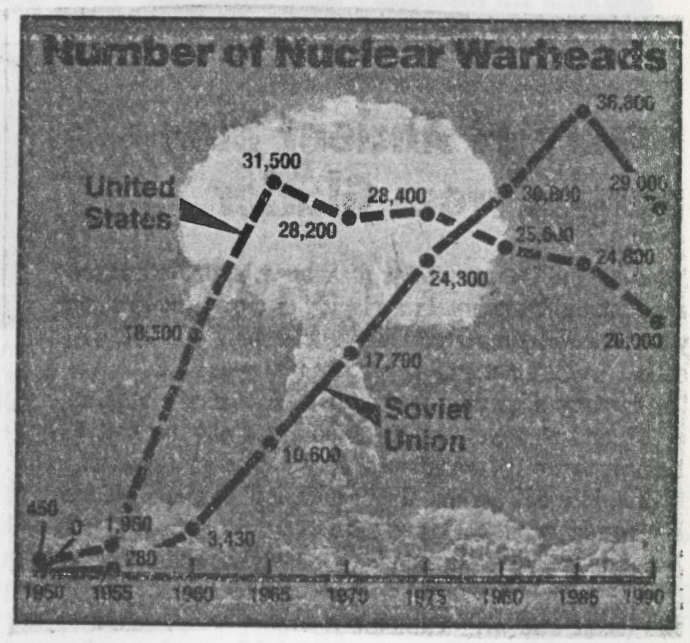
The United States and the Soviet Union were allies against Germany during the war, but when the war ended, they quickly became bitter enemies. The Russians took control of most of Eastern Europe. The U.S. protested but could do nothing to stop them. This was the beginning of the Cold War, the period of great distrust between the U.S. and the USSR. It was called the Cold War because the two countries never actually fought each other.

THE ARMS RACE (1949-1970)

In 1949, the Soviet Union exploded its first atomic bomb. In 1952, the U.S. tested its first hydrogen bomb, and the Soviet Union quickly developed one too. H-Bombs, as they were called, were thousands of times more powerful than the first atomic bombs dropped on Japan at the end of World War II.

In 1957, the Soviets tested their first Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM). ICBMS could carry nuclear bombs to targets thousands of miles away. The entire world was soon threatened with total nuclear destruction!

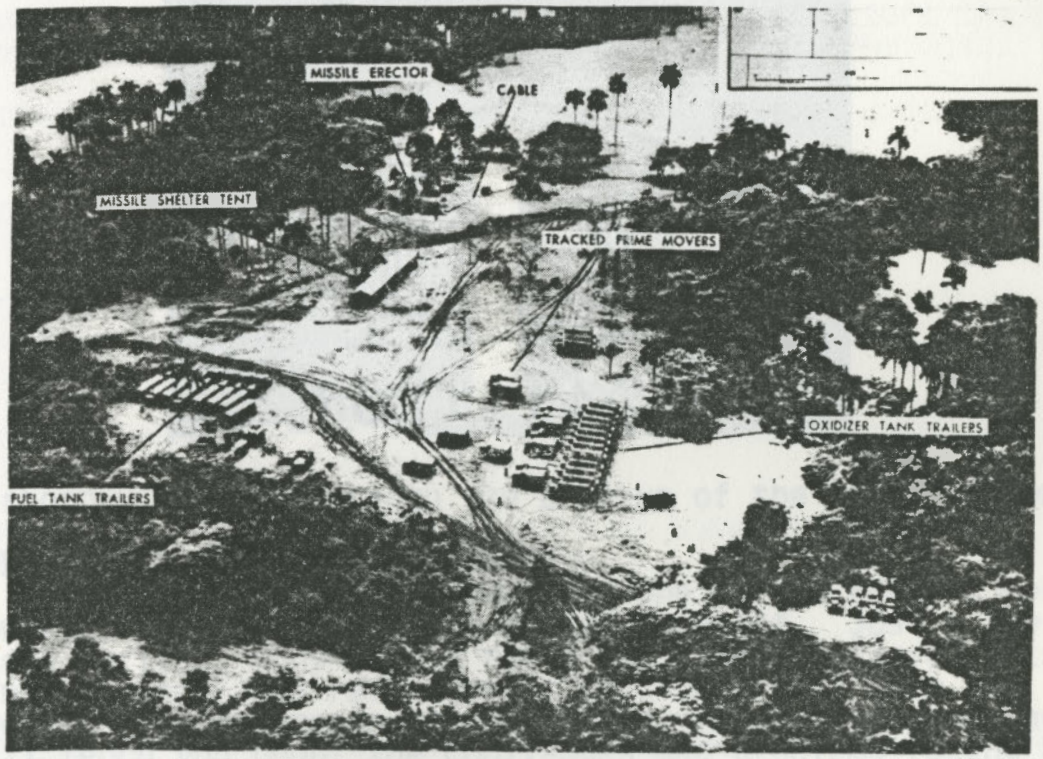
During which time period did the U.S. and USSR make the most nuclear weapons?



Both the Soviet Union and the United States were afraid that the other would get more weapons and gain an advantage. As a result, each country began to build more conventional

and **nuclear weapons**. This buildup of weapons was called the **arms race**. For more than 30 years, the world feared the outbreak of a war between the two superpowers which might become a nuclear war. By the 1960s, each side had more than enough nuclear weapons to destroy the world several times over.

In October 1962, a nuclear war almost started when the USSR tried to put missiles in Cuba, just 90 miles from Florida. American President John F. Kennedy demanded the missiles be removed. After a few days of incredible tension, the Soviets backed down, and the world breathed a sigh of relief. The **Cuban Missile Crisis** was over, but the threat of nuclear destruction continued to hang over the globe well into the 1980s.



Air photograph shows Soviet missiles in Cuba, Oct. 1962.

RECENT HISTORY

During the 1970s, relations between the two countries improved. When the Soviet Army invaded Afghanistan in 1979, however, tensions once again increased. To protest the invasion, the United States refused to send its athletes to the 1980 Olympic Games in Moscow. The Soviets responded in 1984 by **boycotting** the Los Angeles Olympics. The Olympic boycotts symbolized a renewed bitterness between the two nations as the arms race continued and the threat of nuclear war continued to hang over the earth.

In 1985, a new leader emerged who would change the Soviet Union -- and the world -- forever. His name was **Mikhail Gorbachev**. Gorbachev was a communist, but he knew that communism was not working and it had to be changed in order to survive.

In 1986, he introduced plans to **reform** the economy and government of the Soviet Union. The changes he tried to make between 1986 and 1991 helped lead to the collapse of the Soviet Union. We will discuss Gorbachev's reforms more in later sections of this unit.

Gorbachev's reforms began the breakup of the Soviet Union.

THE BREAKUP OF THE SOVIET UNION

In 1991, seemingly overnight, one of the world's most powerful and feared nations ceased to exist. Just a few years earlier, many people never would have believed this could happen. The remainder of this unit will help you understand the reasons why the Soviet Union collapsed and will teach you about the challenges and problems facing this region today.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

(1) Explain the causes and effects of the Russian Revolution.
(2) How did World War II effect the Soviet Union?
(3) Describe the beginnings of the arms race.
(4) When did the Soviet Union collapse? Why is this such an important event?

GLOSSARY

allies -- Countries that help each other in times of war or peace.

boycott -- To refuse to buy or use something as a form of protest.

communism -- A system of government developed by Karl Marx (below at left) which all property is owned in common.

conventional weapons -- Non-nuclear weapons such as rifles, tanks, airplanes, etc.

czars -- Kings who ruled the Russian Empire before the 1917 Revolution. Nicholas II (below at right) was the last.

dictator -- A ruler who has total control over a country and usually rules by force.

empire -- A group of countries, states, or land under the control of one ruler or government.

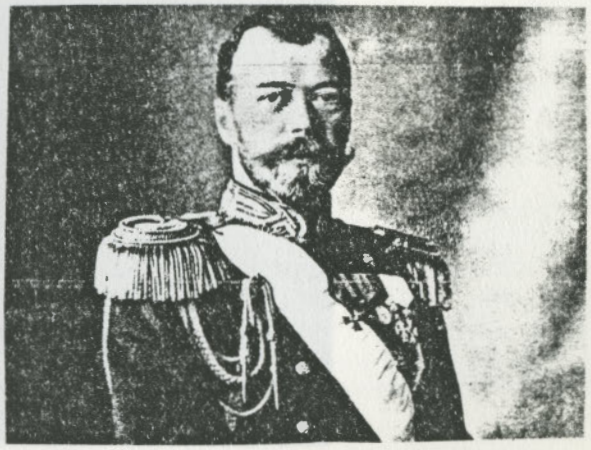
ICBM -- An acronym for Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles, missiles that can carry nuclear warheads thousands of miles (between continents).

nuclear weapons -- Weapons of mass destruction that come from the release of atomic energy.

parliament -- The law-making part of some governments. Members are elected by the people.

peasant -- A poor farmer.

reform -- To make a change for the better.



Marx and Nicholas II.

SECTION II — THE PEOPLE & CULTURE

INTRODUCTION

The Former Soviet Union is a huge region covering over one-sixth of the earth's surface and extending across 11 time zones. Today it is made up of the 15 countries that were once part of the Soviet Union. It is also a region of great **diversity**, both in terms of landscapes and people.

There are more that 150 different ethnic group living in the region today, each with its own special culture. However, this great diversity has caused many problems that threaten the future of Russia and its new neighbors.

VOCABULARY

diversity	minority	exile	"Russify"
nationalism	censor	propaganda	politicians
hostile	glasnost		

KEY PLACES/PEOPLE/EVENTS

Nagorno-Karabakh	Azerbaijan	Moscow
Vladimir Zhirinovsky	Turkmenistan	Armenia
Soviet Republics	Tajikistan	Georgia

PRE-READING QUESTIONS

(1) Why are there so many different ethnic groups in the countries of the former Soviet Union?
(2) Why is there fighting between ethnic groups in many parts of the former Soviet Union today?

Russian peacekeeping troops in Azerbaijan.

THE SOVIET REPUBLICS

Before 1917, the Russian Empire was made up of many different ethnic groups, whose lands had been conquered by the czars. After the revolution, control of the Russian Empire's territory was passed to the communists. Some areas tried to declare their independence, but in Georgia and other places, the communists used force to make the people become part of the Soviet Union.

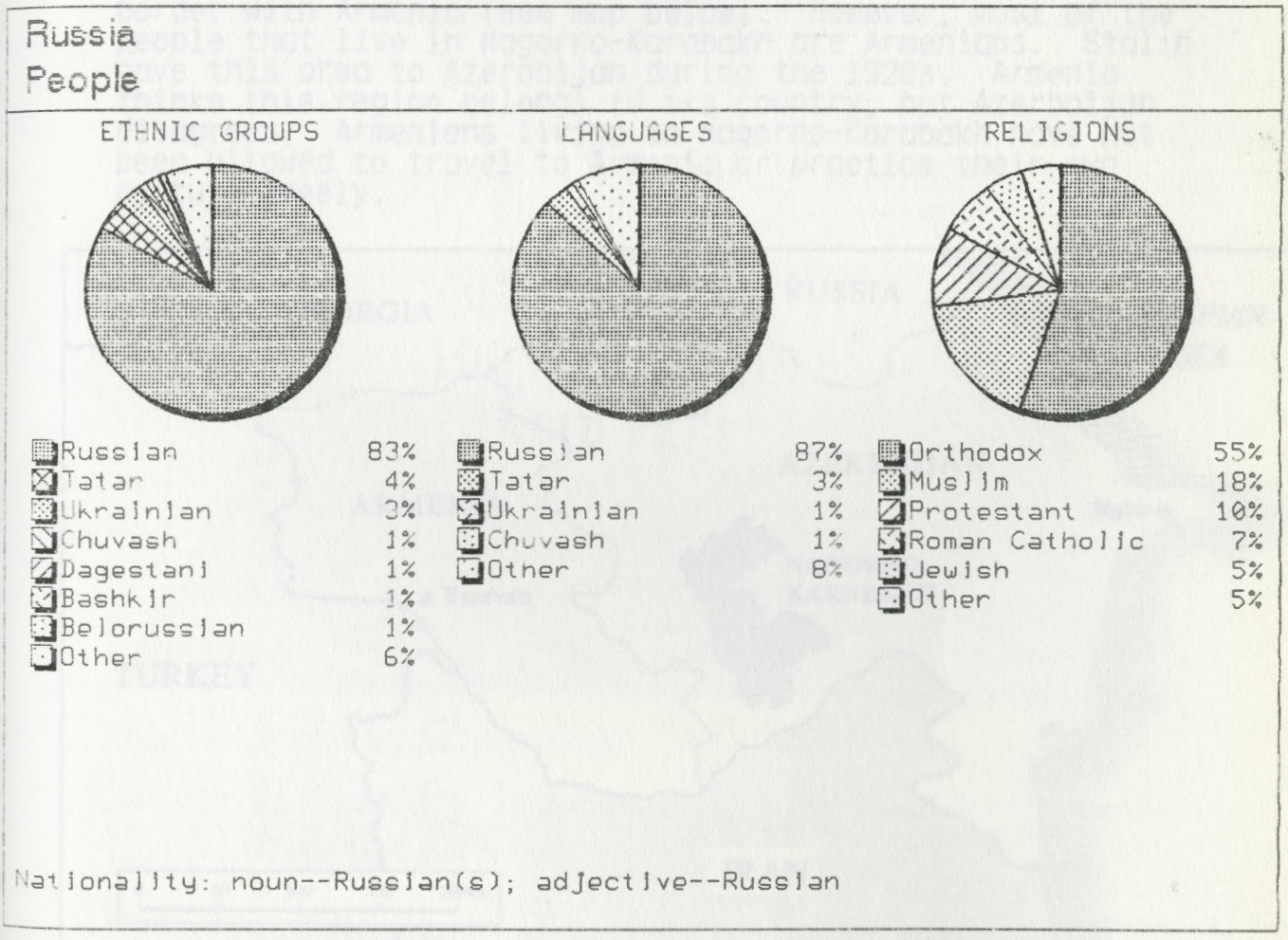
The communists divided the Soviet Union into smaller regions called republics. When the Soviet Union broke up in 1991, there were 15 different republics. Each republic got its name from its main ethnic group. For instance, Kazakhstan was inhabited mainly by Kazakhs. However, each republic had many different groups living within its borders. Russia alone has over 39 different ethnic groups! This mixing of ethnic groups has caused problems that continue to haunt Russia and the former republics today.

Some of the ethnic groups within the region.

RUSSIA

Russia was the largest republic, and Russians made up almost half of the population. Russians held most of the important positions in the Communist Party and the Soviet government, and Moscow was the capital city of the Soviet Union.

Throughout its history, Soviet leaders tried to "Russify" the republics by moving many Russian people into the different republics to live and work. These people spread Russian culture to all parts of the Soviet Union. Russian was named the official language of the Soviet Union, and over the years, many groups lost much of their own cultural identity.



Ethnic makeup of Russia.

ETHNIC VIOLENCE

The communists paid little attention to ethnic differences when they created the borders for the different republics during the 1920s. Small numbers of some ethnic groups were forced to live in republics where they became

minorities. Often times, groups were minorities in countries that included their traditional enemies. Under communist rule, fighting between ethnic groups was prevented only by the presence of the Soviet Army.

The collapse of the Soviet Union has resulted in a wave of ethnic violence across the former empire as hostile ethnic groups try to settle old disputes. Many of these disputes are over territory and borders. Ethnic fighting and civil wars are perhaps the greatest threat to the stability of this vast region.

HOT SPOTS

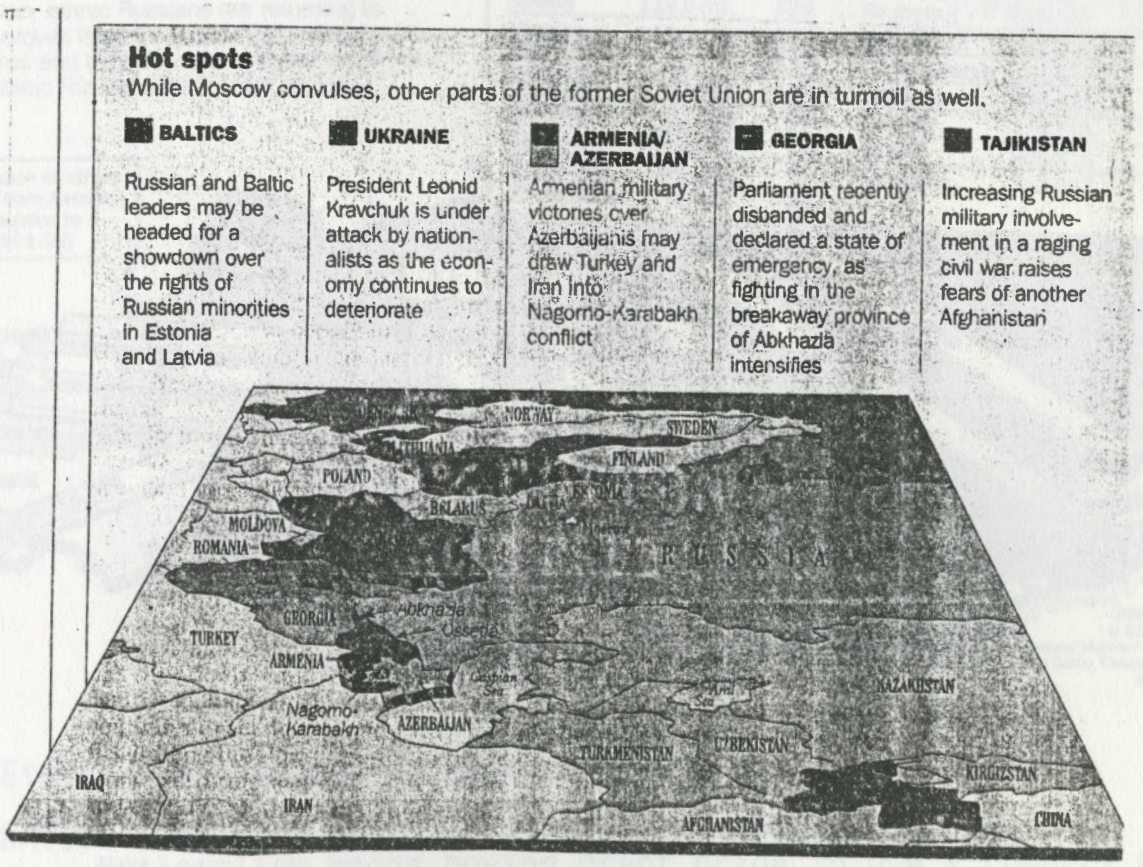
One of the most brutal conflicts has been in Azerbaijan. Nagorno-Karabakh is a small region inside Azerbaijan near the border with Armenia (see map below). However, most of the people that live in Nagorno-Karabakh are Armenians. Stalin gave this area to Azerbaijan during the 1920s. Armenia thinks this region belongs to its country, but Azerbaijan disagrees. Armenians living in Nagorno-Karabakh have not been allowed to travel to Armenia or practice their own culture freely.

Nagorno-Karabakh is inhabited by mostly Armenians.

Since 1989, there has been much fighting between Armenians and Azerbaijanis in Nagorno-Karabakh and other parts of the two countries. Ethnic fighting also is a

problem in Georgia, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan, as well as in smaller regions of many of the former republics.

Russia has sent peace-keeping troops to several regions in order to prevent these conflicts from spreading. Some people have accused the Russians of trying to reconquer their old empire, but Russia has little choice but to try to keep order in the region, because further fighting could threaten its own efforts to rebuild its economy and government.



Locations of ethnic fighting.

As we shall see in later units, ethnic violence is a serious problem in many other parts of the world today, including Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia.

RUSSIANS ABROAD

To complicate matters even more, nearly 25 million Russians are still scattered throughout the former Soviet republics. In Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and the Baltic countries, Russians make up a large percentage of the population. These ethnic Russians find themselves living in foreign nations, where they are not always accepted by other ethnic groups.

The Russian Army has remained in Lithuania and several other republics to try and protect its citizens there. The

Russian government wants other countries to guarantee the rights of ethnic Russians and allow them to live peacefully. Russia cannot afford to bring large numbers of ethnic Russians back home because it lacks jobs and housing for them. Nevertheless, thousands have already returned.

Ethnic Russians moving back to Russia.

NATIONALISM

Nationalism means having great pride in one's country or nationality. Since the breakup of the Soviet Union, the people in most of the region's new countries are very proud of their country's independence. In addition, people living in several smaller regions within the former republics have begun to feel they should become independent countries too and want to control their own affairs.

Chechenya and Tatarstan are two smaller ethnic republics located within Russia. In recent years, each has expressed a desire to become more independent from Russia. For the moment, both regions still depend heavily on Russia for their supplies of oil and other vital resources, making it unlikely that they will break away any time soon. In Georgia, rebels in a region called Abkhazia are fighting to become a separate country.

There is still the danger that Russia and some of the other former republics could one day split into dozens, if not hundreds, of smaller countries. Such a division would greatly increase the chances for more ethnic disputes and violence.

Nationalism is not limited to smaller ethnic groups. Russian politicians like Vladimir Zhirinovsky have used nationalism to win the support of voters by promising to restore Russian control of the former republics and to make Russia a world power again.

CULTURE/RECREATION

Until the 1980s, the government tightly controlled all forms of culture and entertainment in the Soviet Union. Communist officials **censored** books, plays, movies, music, and other art forms. Soviets, whose art or literature criticized the government, were often imprisoned or **exiled.**

Newspapers were controlled by the communists too. The official newspaper was called *Pravda* which means "the truth." Most Soviets found this title funny since the communists rarely told them the truth about what was happening in their country.

Some people had televisions, but most programs were mostly government **propaganda,** including many dull speeches by communist leaders. Plays, films, and books usually dealt with the greatness of communism. All religion was banned because the communists wanted the people to be loyal only to the government.

In 1986, Mikhail Gorbachev introduced his policy of **glasnost** or "openness." Government controls over the press were lifted, and people were allowed to criticize the government for the first time since the Russian Revolution. They also were allowed to read books and see plays that had been banned by the communists. For the first time, many Russians learned the truth about the horrors of the Stalin era and other events in Soviet history.

Today, people across the former Soviet Union enjoy a wide variety of recreational activities, including chess, dancing, music, movies, and sports like basketball, hockey, and, most recently, baseball. American rock music and clothing styles have become popular among teen-agers. In addition, each ethnic group enjoys its own distinct forms of recreation and entertainment.

A DIVERSE REGION

The former Soviet Union is one of the world's most ethnically diverse regions. The future of Russia and its new neighbors depends largely on how well these different ethnic groups and nationalities are able to live together and to cooperate in order to meet the many challenges that face their countries today.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

(1) How were ethnic groups divided by the communists?
(2) Why are ethnic violence and nationalism in nearby countries problems for Russia?
(3) Many ethnic Russians still live in other countries that were once part of the Soviet Union. Why is this a problem today?
(4) Can you think of any ways to solve the region's many ethnic problems?

GLOSSARY

censor -- To check communications before allowing them to become public and to hold back those viewed as unfavorable (ex: newspaper stories being checked by the government before publication).

cultural identity -- A person's sense of belonging to a certain ethnic group or culture.

diversity -- Differences among peoples, regions, etc. Having many different parts, characteristics, qualities.

exile -- To punish a people by forcing them to leave their country and live somewhere else.

hostile -- To act with anger or hatred toward another person or group.

minority -- A group living in a country that has less power than the main group. A minority is not always the smallest groups.

nationalism - To have great pride in one's country.

politicians -- One who is actively involved in politics. One who holds or runs for public office (ex: mayor, president, lawmaker).

propaganda -- Communications used to persuade people to think a certain way. Often times, information is twisted or exaggerated to influence people a certain way.

stability -- Situation in a country when the economy is doing well and there are no civil wars or other problems to disrupt the governing of the country.

SECTION III — THE ECONOMY

INTRODUCTION

The future of Russia and the other new countries of this region depends largely on how well their governments are able to solve the tremendous economic problems created by 70 years of communism. Lenin and the communists set out to create a country in which there was no unemployment, poverty, and the nation's resources were shared by the people. It was a nice idea, but the system did not work.

VOCABULARY

capitalism/free-market economy	entrepreneur	capital
	capital goods	quotas
black market	supply and demand	inflation
collective farms	technology	consumer goods

KEY PLACES/PEOPLE/EVENTS

perestroika	Aral Sea	Chernobyl
"shock therapy"	Lake Baikal	Boris Yeltsin
privatization		

Some foreign businesses, like this Moscow McDonald's, have opened in Russia.

PRE-READING QUESTIONS

(1) Why did the Soviet economic system fail?
(2) Identify and explain the current economic problems and challenges facing Russia and the other new countries in this region.
(3) Describe the serious environmental problems facing this region today.

THE COMMUNIST SYSTEM

Today, Russia and the other countries in this region are facing many economic problems. To understand these problems, you will need to know a little bit about how the communist economic system worked and why it failed in the Soviet Union.

The Soviet economic system had two main features. First, there was no private property. All businesses, shops, factories, transportation, communications, and industries were owned by the Soviet government. During the 1930s, farmers were forced to combine their land into large government-owned farms called collectives.

A collective farm in Georgia.

Second, the government strictly controlled all parts of the country's economy. Special planning committees decided what would be produced on farms and in factories, how much workers would be paid, and how much products would cost. Farms and factories produced goods which were then sold back to the government. Government planners then decided how to distribute the products to the different cities.

This economic system is very different from **capitalism**, the economic system used in the United States and other non-communist countries. In a capitalist, or free-market system, people run their own farms and businesses. The types of products they make depend on what items people want, and the prices people pay depend on the amounts available. For example, a product that is hard to find and a lot of people want will cost more. In business, this system is called the law of **supply and demand**. Competition between different businesses helps insure quality goods.

PROBLEMS WITH THE SYSTEM

Over the years, government-run industries and farming proved to be very inefficient. Everybody in the Soviet Union was guaranteed a job, but farmers and factory workers had no reason to work hard since they got paid the same no matter how much they produced. People had little pride in their work because they weren't working for themselves.

Factory workers were pushed to meet **quotas** but were rarely rewarded for their extra work. Since all decisions were made by the government planners, workers had little reason to offer suggestions as to how to improve things. Factories got resources and supplies free from the government, so managers did not care if materials were wasted or used inefficiently.

From the beginning, Soviet factories produced mainly **capital goods**, like machinery for factories or farm equipment. As a result, **consumer goods** -- like toilet paper, soap, shoes, toothpaste, television, and automobiles -- were very hard to get. The communists were not too concerned about how comfortably their people lived. They felt it was more important to build industry and their armed forces.

By the mid-1960s, the Soviet economy began to stop growing. While the United States and other western nations were improving their **technology**, the Soviet Union's factories quickly were becoming outdated. Because of inefficient farming, the Soviet Union had to import much of its food supply. These problems eventually led to the collapse of the Soviet economy.

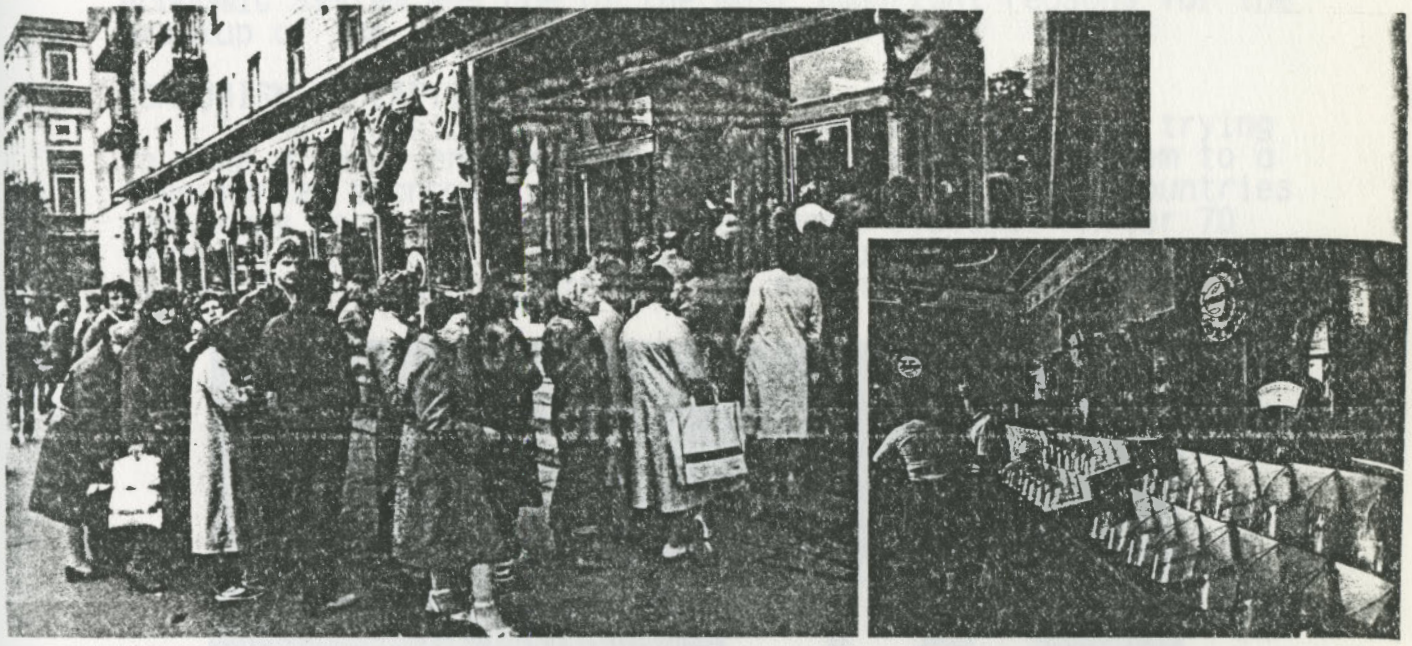
ARMS RACE

The arms race was one of the most important reasons for the collapse of the Soviet economy during the late 1980s. During the arms race, the Soviet Union spent more than 25 percent of its wealth and many of its resources on defense.

This setup took money that could have been used to help improve agriculture, industry, and transportation. It also prevented the government from producing more consumer goods for the people.

HARDSHIPS

The problems of the communist economic system made life hard for most Soviet people. Shortages of consumer goods forced people to wait in long lines for many hours at government stores to get the items they needed. It was not uncommon for a person to have to wait over eight hours to get a single item, such as milk, meat, or a pair of shoes. In most stores, the shelves were always nearly empty. For Soviet people, waiting in line for hours every day was a way of life.



People waiting in line to buy shoes and the empty shelves that often greeted them.

Many people turned to the illegal **black market** to get the things they needed. Black marketeers sold consumer goods for high prices and made big profits. Black marketeers usually smuggled these goods in from other countries or stole them from government industries.

Housing was another problem since the government did not allow people to own their own homes. Most people lived in crowded government apartment buildings, where they often had to share a single kitchen or bathroom with several families. In Moscow, there was an 18-year waiting list to get your own apartment! Given all these problems, it is no wonder that by the late 1980s the Soviet people were ready for a change.

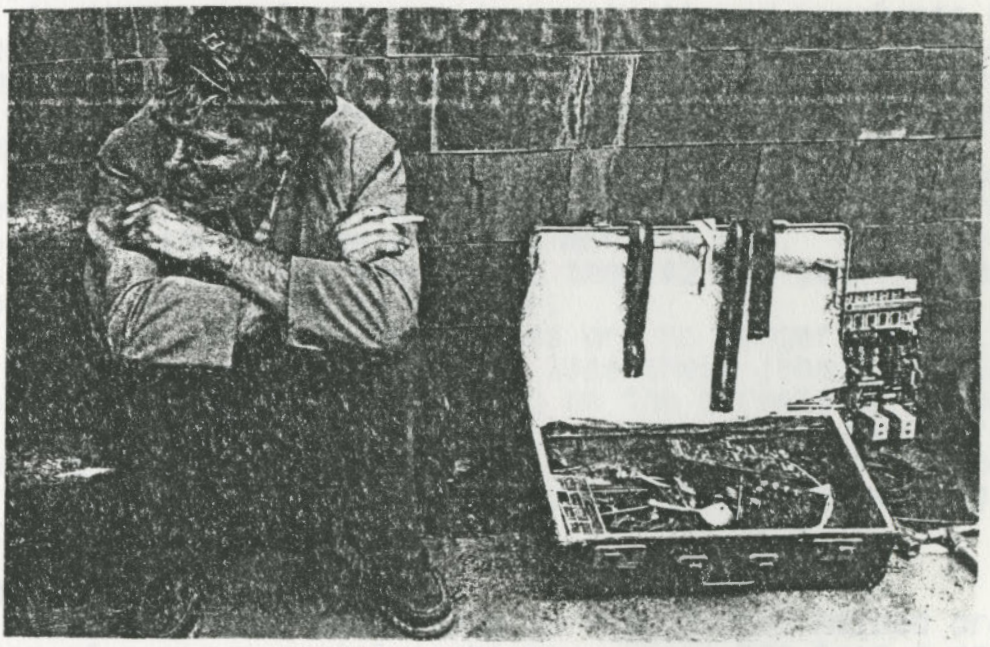
THE SYSTEM FAILS

The Soviet economy began to fall apart during the 1980s. In 1985, Mikhail Gorbachev introduced his policy of **Perestroika,** a series of reforms that included plans to improve and modernize the Soviet economy. In Russian, perestroika means "restructuring." Gorbachev hoped to increase the production of consumer goods and to improve the quality of Soviet products.

Gorbachev did not want to get rid of communism but to improve it slowly. Nevertheless, most people demanded quicker change than Gorbachev's reforms, which failed to improve the economy. By the late 1980s, shortages of food and consumer goods became worse than ever because the nation's systems of transportation and production had begun to completely break down. The failure of the communist economic system was one of the most important reasons for the breakup of the Soviet Union.

COMMUNISM TO CAPITALISM

Today, Russia and the other former republics are trying to make a quick change from a communist economic system to a free-market economy. Most of the world's developed countries took many years to build their economic systems. After 70 years of communism, Russia must build a whole new economic system from scratch overnight. It has not been easy.



A street vendor in Moscow.

The Russian government must decide how to switch the ownership of businesses, factories, equipment, and other resources from the government to private citizens. The process of **privatization** is taking place very slowly.

Ownership of most small shops and businesses has already been changed, but many larger factories and industries are still owned by the government. Much of Russia's farmland is still organized in collective farms.

Change has been slow, but some progress is being made. Today, in Moscow and other cities, the streets are full of **entrepreneurs**, people selling everything from shoes to souvenirs of communism. However, the Russian government is still trying to encourage people to start more and larger businesses to provide even more basic goods and services for the people.

The United States and other countries have promised to help the Russians improve their economy. Some foreign businesses have already opened in Russia, and economic experts have been sent to teach Russians how a free-market system works. The world knows that the chances for world peace will be much better if Russia's economy develops successfully.

PAINFUL CHANGE

In 1992, Russian President **Boris Yeltsin** introduced his plan to change the Russian economy to a free-market system. His plan called for the quick change of the Russian economy through what was called "**shock therapy.**" This sudden change to capitalism has caused even more hardships for the Russian people.

In 1992, the Russian government allowed merchants and industries to set the prices for their own goods. Instead of becoming more affordable, prices for consumer goods have gone way up. There are more goods available, but they are too expensive for most people to buy.

Inflation has affected other parts of the former Soviet Union as well. In the Ukraine, a good cut of meat can cost almost half the average worker's monthly pay. (The average person in the Ukraine makes less than $2 per year!) Many people are struggling to survive.

Now that farms and industries are no longer controlled by the government, many people may lose their jobs. Homeless people and beggars are appearing on the streets of Moscow, St. Petersburg, and other cities. Many people are worried about the future. One sign of this fear is the fact that marriage rates in Russia have dropped noticeably during the last two years.

CRIME & SOCIAL PROBLEMS

Harsh economic conditions in Russia have helped create a number of serious social problems. There has been a great increase in violent crime, especially among teen-agers. The murder rate has doubled, and organized crime gangs have taken control of many new businesses. Merchants must pay these gangs a large part of their profits for "protection."

These gangs also have helped smuggle many of Russia's valuable mineral resources out of the country and have sold

them for huge profits. While a few Russians have become extremely rich during the change to capitalism, most remain poor. Russia's police force does not yet have the manpower or equipment to do much to stop organized crime.

Health care is another huge problem in Russia today. Many women cannot afford proper diets, leading to even more unhealthy children being born. Hospitals don't have enough rooms, beds, medicines, or properly trained doctors to care for the people. In fact, Russia's population actually has begun to decrease in recent years. These problems are made even more serious by the fact that building a strong free-market economy requires a large and healthy work force.

THE FUTURE

Most Russians were willing to accept the hardships that they knew would come with trying to set up a free-market economy, but many are growing tired of waiting for things to get better. Since 1993, the Russian government has begun to abandoned "shock therapy" in favor of slower reforms. Some people even think that the government should take control of the economy again to make things better for the people.

At this moment, Russia's future is very uncertain. However, changing economic systems takes time, and the Russian economy is showing some signs of improvement. Russia's current problems may be just "growing pains" that come with building a brand-new economic system.

REVIEW YOUR READING

1) Explain the difference between a communist economic system and a free-market system.
2) Identify and explain the problems that caused the failure of the Soviet economic system.
3) Describe the challenges facing Russia today as it makes the change to a free-market economy. How have the U.S. and other countries tried to help?
4) How has "shock therapy" affected the Russian people?

SPECIAL REPORT/THE ENVIRONMENT

The end of communist rule has revealed another great challenge for the countries of the former Soviet Union In their drive to become an industrial power, the communists had absolutely no laws to protect the environment from pollution by industries.

Many factories dumped toxic wastes and chemicals directly into rivers, lakes, seas, and the air -- without any concern for the effects the toxins might have on plants, animals, and people. As a result, the number of children born with birth defects has increased dramatically in recent years, and many people in industrial areas suffer from lung diseases and other sicknesses.

Soviet leaders were especially careless with nuclear energy. In 1986, human error caused an explosion at the Chernobyl nuclear plant that sent a huge radioactive cloud

Environmental damage in the former Soviet Union.

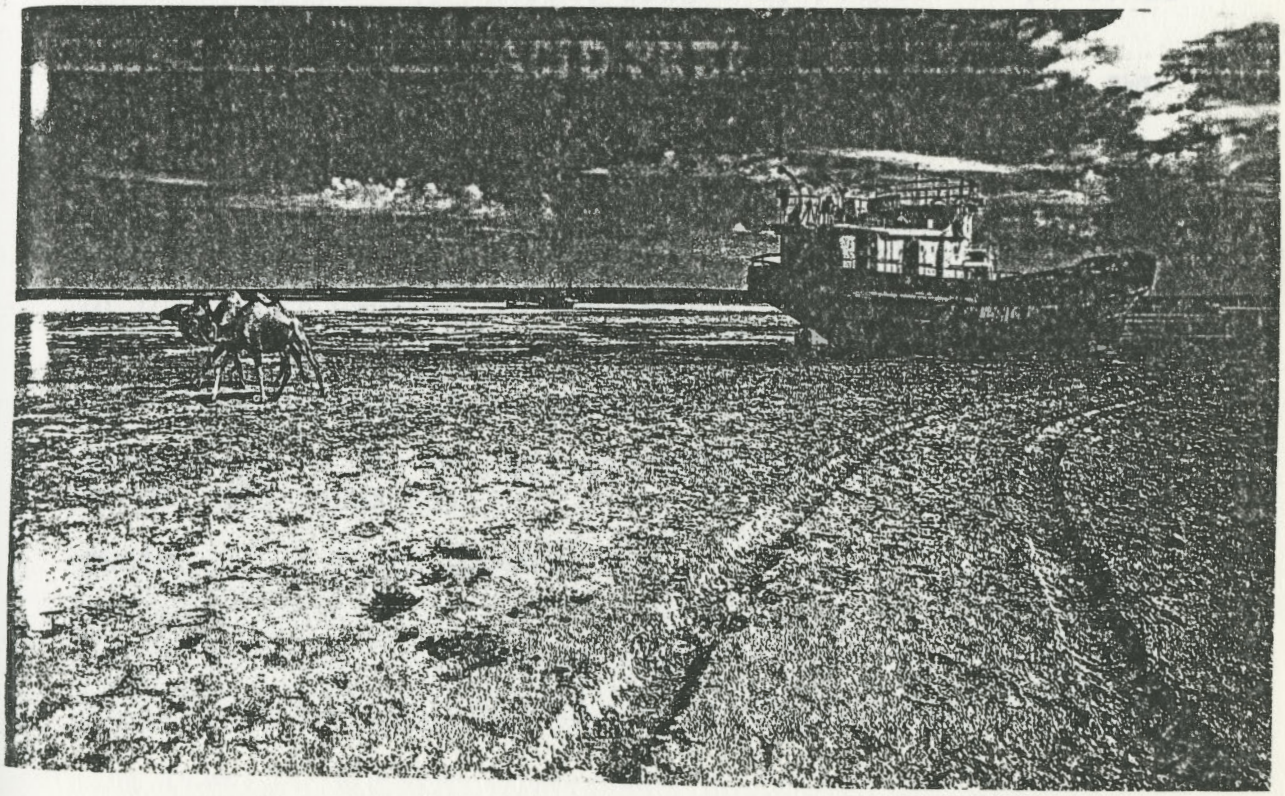
into the atmosphere. At least 5,000 people were killed, while many more continue to die from cancer and other related ailments. Thousands of square miles of land in Ukraine and Belarus were contaminated by radiation.

Even more terrifying is the fact that most of the nuclear power plants still operating in the former Soviet Union are outdated and in poor condition. There could be another Chernobyl in the near future!

During the Cold War, the Soviets carelessly conducted nuclear tests and exposed thousands of people to deadly radiation. In addition, radioactive wastes were simply dumped into the sea. The Soviet government kept all this secret from the people and kept no records, so there is no telling how serious the damage is.

Industrial pollution has nearly destroyed much of the region's once-beautiful environment. Many acres of forestland have been destroyed by acid rain, while two of the region's largest bodies of water have been severely contaminated by pollution and careless development.

Lake Baikal, located in eastern Russia, is the world's deepest lake. However, nearby factories have severely polluted the lake and killed many of its fish and wildlife. In Kazakhstan, water from rivers feeding into the **Aral Sea** was drained to provide irrigation for cotton crops. However, so much water has been taken that nearly half of the lake, once the size of West Virginia, is now completely dried up.



The dried-up Aral Sea.

These are only two examples of the many environmental horror stories now being revealed across the former Soviet Union. Although many more people are now working to save the environment in Russia and the other former republics, most governments do not have the money to pay for any major cleanup projects.

GLOSSARY

black market -- The illegal buying and selling of goods.

capital -- Wealth in the form of money, property, or equipment that can be invested in a certain business.

capital goods -- Products used by industries to make other goods (ex: machinery).

capitalism/free-market system -- An economic system in which businesses are owned by individuals instead of by the government.

collective farms -- Large farms in which all land, equipment, and livestock is shared by many people.

consumer goods -- Products bought by people for personal use (ex: clothing).

entrepreneurs -- People who start and operate their own businesses.

inflation -- High prices for goods or services.

supply and demand -- Rule of business that helps determine what things are produced and how much they cost. The supply of a product depends on the demand for it. The price of a product depends on its supply. For example, if there is less of a certain product and the demand for it is high, it will cost more because it is harder to find.

technology -- The methods and materials used in science, trade, and industry.

quotas -- A fixed amount.

SECTION IV — POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

INTRODUCTION

Since 1991, Russia has taken several important steps toward creating a more democratic system of government. Russian people have been allowed to choose their president and lawmakers, while enjoying more personal freedom than they have ever known. The future of democratic change in the region will depend heavily on events taking place during the next few years.

VOCABULARY

political party	coup	dissidents
constitution	democratic/democracy	military
corruption	institutions	

KEY PLACES/PEOPLE/EVENTS

Communist Party
Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)
Baltic Republics
Federal Assembly

The Kremlin: Russian government buildings in Moscow.

PRE-READING QUESTIONS

(1) How has government in Russia changed since the fall of communism in 1991?
(2) Describe the problems and challenges facing Russia as it tries to create a democratic system of government.
(3) Explain the issues surrounding the armed forces of the former Soviet Union.

THE PARTY

From 1922 to 1991, the Soviet Union was ruled by the Communist Party. The Communist Party was the only **political party** allowed in the country. Although only about 9 percent of the Soviet people were allowed to join the party, its members held the most important positions in the government and the **military**. Party members made all of the important decisions about the economy and other matters.

Communist leaders boasted of equality for all, but **corruption** was a big problem in the Soviet system. Many communist officials used their positions to get the best housing, food, and other luxury items unavailable to most people.

LIMITS ON FREEDOM

The Communist Party was determined to hold on to its power at all costs. For many years, people could not openly criticize the communist government without fear of being punished. Many **dissidents** were imprisoned or forced to leave the country. The communist secret police (**KGB**) kept a close watch on the activities of all Soviet citizens.

Soviet citizens were not allowed to travel outside of the country, read foreign newspapers, or watch foreign television programs. The communists knew that if Soviets saw how others in capitalist countries were living, they would be unhappy with communism.

Education was also controlled by the communists. From the earliest ages, Soviet children were taught to be loyal to the party. Communist youth groups, such as the Children of October and the Young Pioneers, were used to teach communist beliefs. School books left out anything bad about the history and government of the Soviets. Until 1989, the Soviet people had most aspects of their lives controlled by the Communist Party.

GORBACHEV

The economic failures of the 1980s caused many Soviets to openly question the ability of the Communist Party to run the country. We have already learned how Mikhail Gorbachev tried to save the communist system by making a series of reforms beginning in 1986.

In addition to improving the economy, Gorbachev wanted to make the government more **democratic** by taking away much of the Communist Party's power. In 1989, he allowed people to vote in some local elections, something Soviet citizens had not done since 1917! Most communists kept their positions, but people were given a taste of democracy.

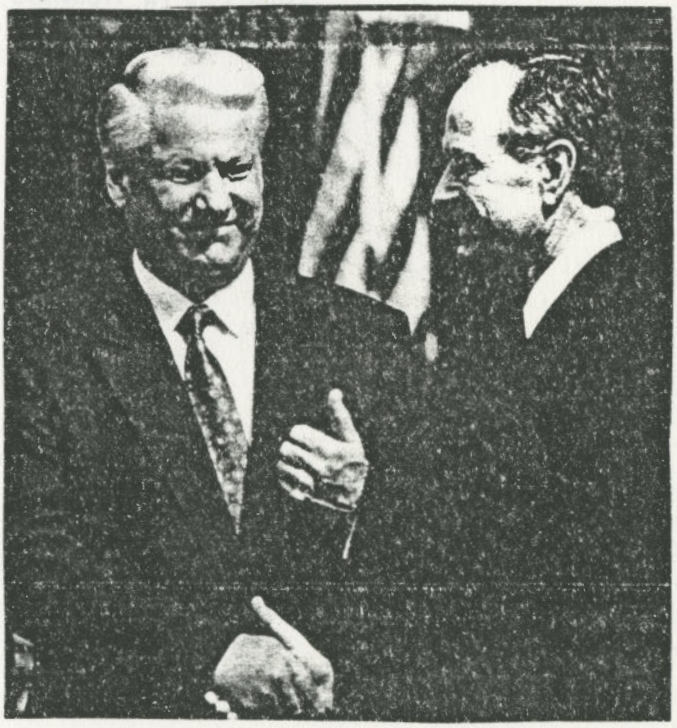
In 1989, Gorbachev allowed the countries of Eastern Europe to break free from the Soviet Union. He wanted to keep control of the Soviet republics, but his reforms had given many republics the courage to demand their own freedom from the Soviet Union.

In 1990, the **Baltic Republics** (Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia) began to demand their independence. The collapse of the Soviet Union was beginning.

THE NEW RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

By 1990, the Communist Party had lost much of its power and the people's respect. In 1991, a group of communists and KGB leaders feared that Gorbachev's reforms would destroy communism. In August, they took Gorbachev prisoner and tried to take over the government.

The people of Moscow took to the streets to protest. They built barricades around the Russian parliament building, where lawmakers led by Boris Yeltsin opposed the takeover. The people were willing to risk their lives to keep the new freedoms they had dreamed of for so long. The **coup** leaders ordered the army to attack the protesters, but the soldiers refused, and the coup failed.



Boris Yeltsin with former U.S. President George Bush.

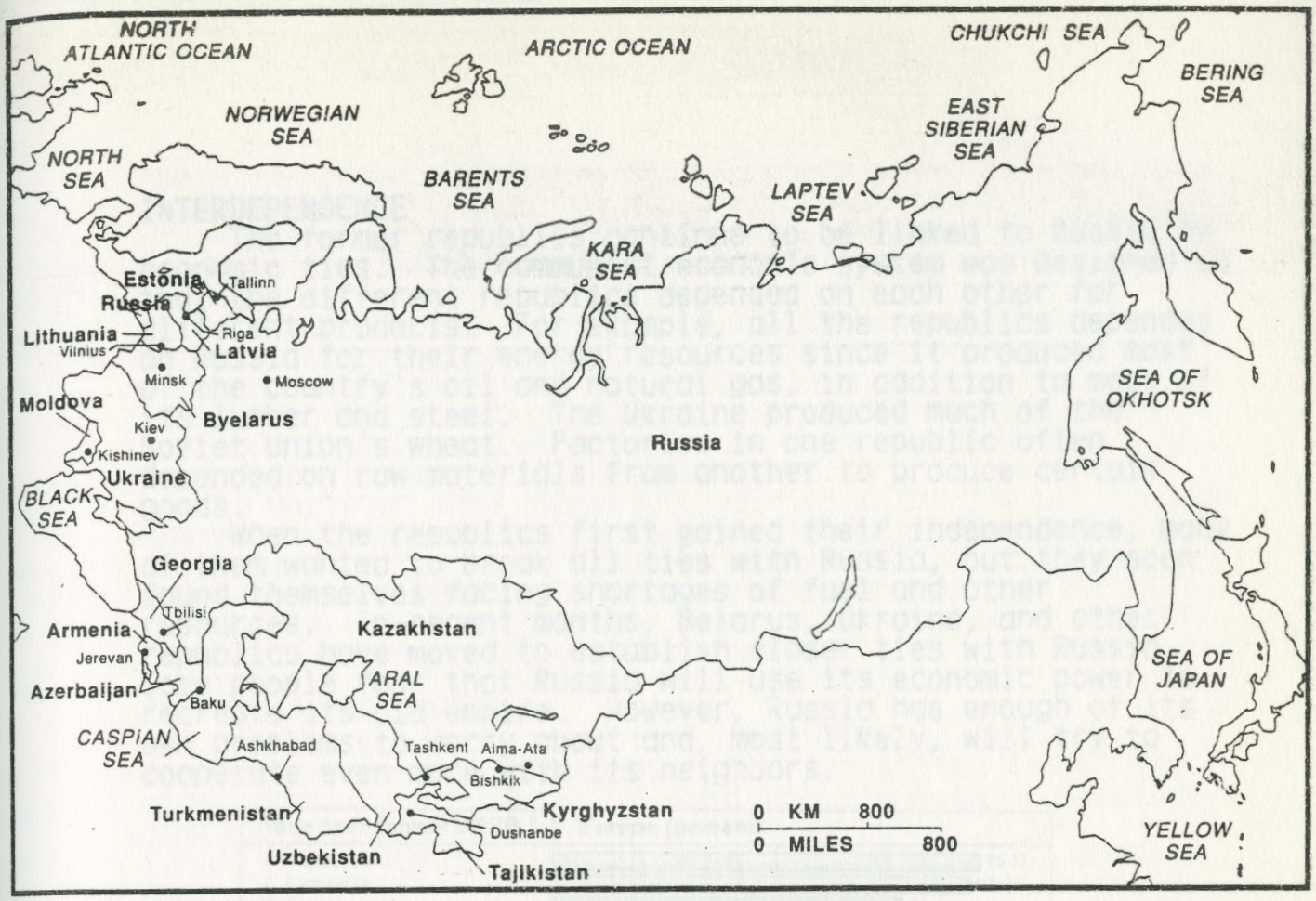
Soon afterward, the Russian Parliament banned the Communist Party and took over its offices. All over the country, joyous people tore down statues of Lenin and other communist leaders. One by one, the republics declared their independence. The Soviet Union, once the most feared nation on earth, was finished.

Gorbachev had made important changes that led to the breakup of the Soviet Union, but he was criticized for wanting to continue communism. He was overshadowed by Boris Yeltsin, whose bravery during the coup attempt won him the support of many Russians. In 1992, Yeltsin became the first freely elected President of Russia and promised to make Russia a full democracy with a free-market economy.

THE CIS

The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) was formed soon after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The CIS is made up of 11 of the former Soviet republics, each of which has its own constitution and government. The Baltic Republics and Georgia refused to join the CIS because they did not want to be influenced by the Russians any longer.

The main purpose of the CIS is to encourage trade and other forms of cooperation among the member nations. Russia -- by reason of its large size, population, and resources -- is the dominant force in the CIS. So far, the CIS has had little success in solving problems, such as ethnic disputes, in the former republics. Its future is in danger unless its member countries become more willing to work together to solve their common problems.



THE 11 REPUBLICS OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF INDEPENDENT STATES

Republic	Capital	Population (in millions, according to 1990 census)
1. Russia	Moscow	(148.0)
2. Ukraine	Kiev	(51.8)
3. Uzbekistan	Tashkent	(20.3)
4. Kazakhstan	Alma-Ata	(16.7)
5. Byelarus	Minsk	(10.3)
6. Azerbaijan	Baku	(7.1)
7. Tajikistan	Dushanbe	(5.3)
8. Moldova	Kishinev	(4.4)
9. Kyrghyzstan	Bishkik	(4.4)
10. Turkmenistan	Ashkhabad	(3.6)
11. Armenia	Jerevan	(3.3)

THE 4 REPUBLICS THAT DID NOT JOIN THE COMMONWEALTH OF INDEPENDENT STATES

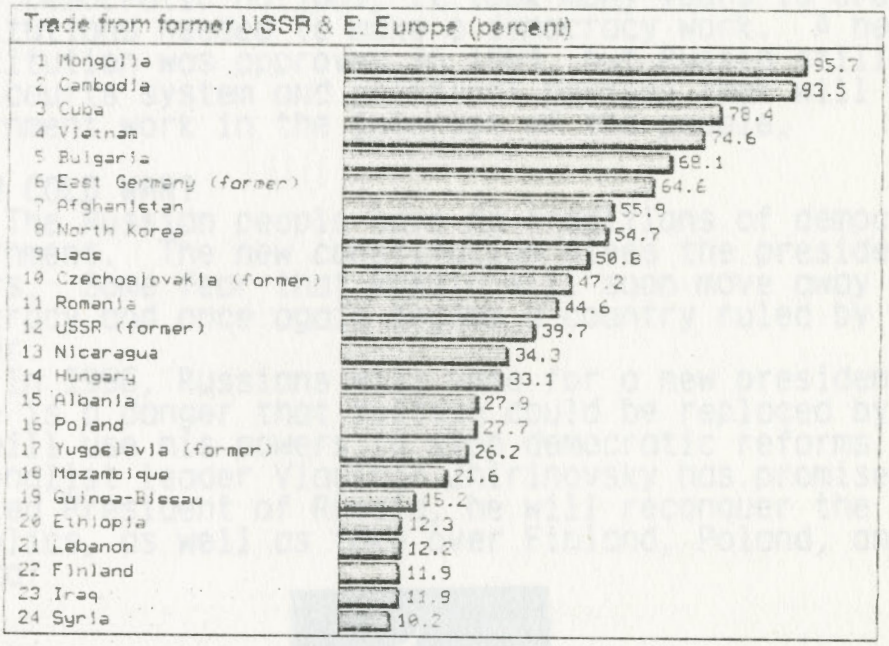
Republic	Capital	Population (in millions, according to 1990 census)
1. Georgia	Tbilisi	(5.5)
2. Lithuania	Vilnius	(3.7)
3. Latvia	Riga	(2.7)
4. Estonia	Tallin	(1.6)

The area that makes up what was the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (U.S.S.R.) is a mosaic of ethnic groupings and nationalities, with approximately 130 different languages. After the dissolution of communism in the Soviet Union in 1991, this very diverse population reacted with nationalistic fervor, and the 15 republics of the Soviet Union contended with the question of whether or not it was in their best interest to unite into a new union. Eleven did, into what is now called the Commonwealth of Independent States (C.I.S.), with 4 choosing independence of the Commonwealth.

INTERDEPENDENCE

The former republics continue to be linked to Russia by economic ties. The communist economic system was designed so that the different republics depended on each other for different products. For example, all the republics depended on Russia for their energy resources since it produced most of the country's oil and natural gas, in addition to most of its lumber and steel. The Ukraine produced much of the Soviet Union's wheat. Factories in one republic often depended on raw materials from another to produce certain goods.

When the republics first gained their independence, many of them wanted to break all ties with Russia, but they soon found themselves facing shortages of fuel and other resources. In recent months, Belarus, Ukraine, and other republics have moved to establish closer ties with Russia. Some people fear that Russia will use its economic power to recreate its old empire. However, Russia has enough of its own problems to worry about and, most likely, will try to cooperate even more with its neighbors.



The Soviet Union traded mainly with other communist countries.

STRUGGLE FOR POWER

There have been historic changes in Russia over the last three years, but the future of Russia and the other countries in the region is still very much up in the air.

In Russia, increasing economic hardships have caused people to grow unhappy with Boris Yeltsin. Some people even began talking of a return to communism because at least then

there was order and people had enough to eat. In 1992, many Russians began to question the great powers that Yeltsin had given himself to improve the economy. Because of increasing pressure, Yeltsin has had to back off from his more radical reforms.

In October 1993, members of the Russian parliament who opposed Yeltsin tried to take over the government. Yeltsin ordered the Russian Army to attack the parliament building where the rebels had assembled. Almost 200 Russians were killed and many more were wounded in the fighting, but Yeltsin kept control of the government.

In December 1993, elections were held for the new Russian law-making body called the Federal Assembly. To the world's surprise, many seats were won by members of parties that oppose further reforms, including nationalists and communists. Such an assembly membership may make it harder to pass laws that will continue reforms.

THE FUTURE OF DEMOCRACY

Russia still needs to take many steps to create a democratic system of government. In the United States and other democratic nations, it took many years to create the institutions needed to make a democracy work. A new constitution was approved in 1993, but Russia still needs a good courts system and political parties that will make the government work in the interest of the people.

A NEW COLD WAR?

The Russian people have no traditions of democratic government. The new constitution gives the president great powers. Some fear that Russia will soon move away from democracy and once again become a country ruled by one strong leader.

In 1996, Russians will vote for a new president, and there is a danger that Yeltsin could be replaced by a leader who will use his powers to stop democratic reforms. Nationalist leader Vladimir Zhirinovsky has promised that, if elected President of Russia, he will reconquer the former republics, as well as take over Finland, Poland, and even Alaska!

Vladimir Zhirinovsky

Unless the economy improves and a true democratic system of government is set up, there remains the chance that control of Russia will fall into the hands of a leader or group hostile to the United States. The renewal of the Cold War would be a great threat to the future of the world. For that reason, what happens in Russia and other parts of the former Soviet Union is of great importance to everyone --even you.

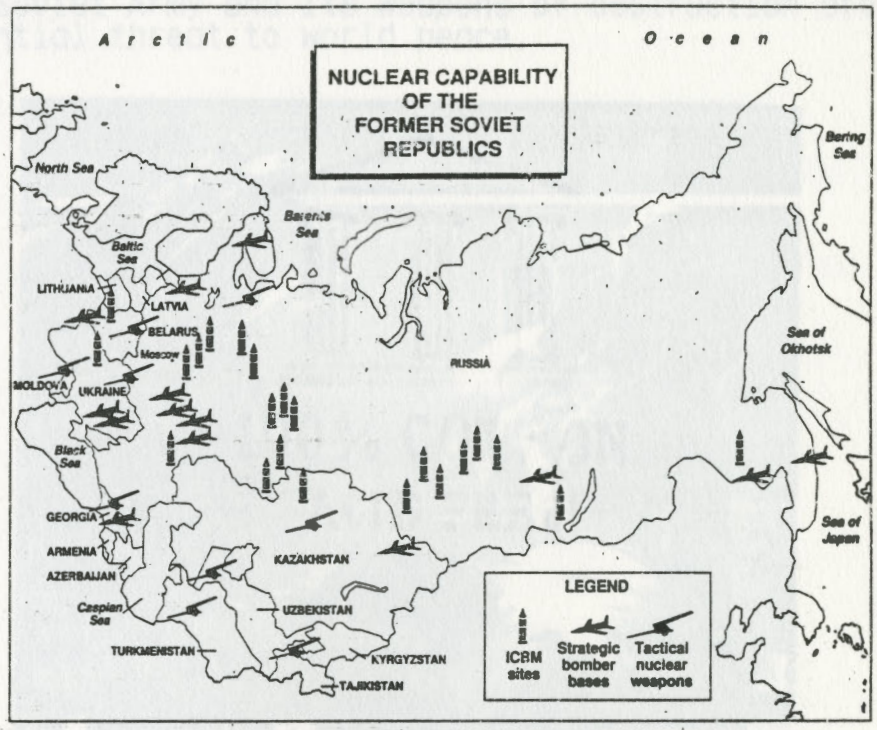
REVIEW QUESTIONS

(1) How did the Communist Party control the government and people of the Soviet Union?
(2) Identify and explain the events leading up to the fall of the Communist Party in the Soviet Union.
(3) Identify the members of the CIS, and explain the purpose of this new organization of countries.
(4) Describe the current relationship between Russia and the former republics.
(5) Why is democracy in Russia in danger? What effects could the end of democracy in Russia have on the world?

SPECIAL REPORT/NUCLEAR WEAPONS & THE RED ARMY

One of the most serious problems caused by the breakup of the Soviet Union has been the issue of the nation's nuclear weapons and armed forces.

Until 1991, four republics had nuclear missiles placed within their borders. They were Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan. Until recently, many of these weapons were still targeted at the U.S. As long as they exist, there is the danger they will be used in future disputes between countries or ethnic groups. The United States and other countries are encouraging the Soviets to destroy their nuclear weapons and have even offered to help them do it.



Locations of nuclear weapons in the former Soviet Union.

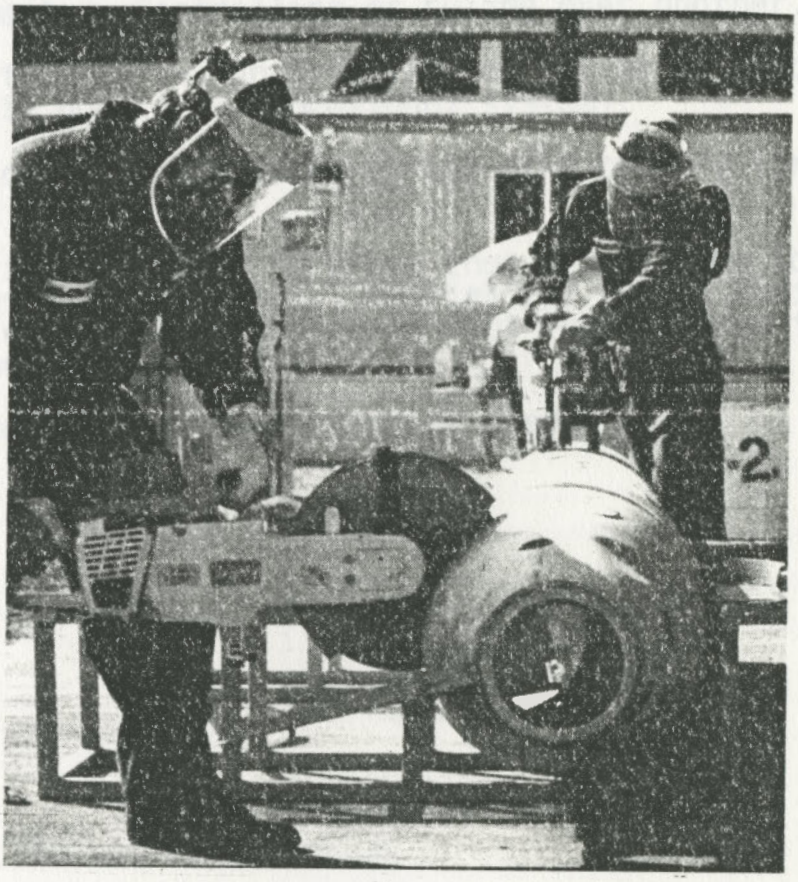
The end of the Cold War cost many Soviet nuclear scientists their jobs. Desperate for money, some of them may be willing to work for other countries or willing to sell information and materials to dangerous nations, like Libya and Iran. Such an arrangement could lead to the spread of nuclear weapons to even more countries, increasing the chances they may be used.

In addition, the Soviet Union kept one of the world's largest and most powerful armed forces during the Cold War. The Red Army had millions of men placed across the Soviet Union. Disputes have started recently about which countries will get to control different parts of the old Soviet Army

and Navy. Many of the former republic now want to create their own armed forces to protect themselves. Some republics have even claimed army equipment within their borders as their own.

Thousands of Russian soldiers are still stationed in the former republics. The Russian government cannot bring them home because it doesn't have enough housing for them. Many army units are no longer getting paid and must survive on their own. Some soldiers have even sold their weapons to members of warring ethnic groups to make money.

Some people fear that unless conditions improve for the armed forces, they might become part of an effort to take over the government. Even though the Cold War is over, the old Soviet Army and its weapons of destruction are still a potential threat to world peace.



Disarming a nuclear weapon.

GLOSSARY

constitution -- A written plan of government.

corruption -- Dishonesty. Corrupt officials may accept bribes and use their positions to get rich.

coup -- A sudden overthrow of a government.

democracy -- A system of government in which the people choose their own leaders and help make decisions.

dissidents -- People who protest or speak out against their government.

dominant -- Controlling or ruling over another.

institutions -- An organization set up to accomplish a certain goal (ex: educational system).

military -- The armed forces of a country (army, navy, etc.).

political party -- A group that has its own ideas about how to run the government. Parties try to get their own people elected to public office so that they can run the government as the party sees fit.

radical -- Extreme action or idea.

Armenia
Geography

TOTAL AREA: 11,505.8 sq mi
Land area: 10,965.2 sq mi

LAND BOUNDARIES: 779.4 miles

COASTLINE: 0.0 miles

COMPARATIVE AREA:
slightly larger than Maryland

LAND BOUNDARIES:
Azerbaijan (east) 566 km, Azerbaijan (south) 221 km, Georgia 164 km, Iran 35 km, Turkey 268 km

DISPUTES:
violent and longstanding dispute with Azerbaijan over ethnically Armenian exclave of Nagorno-Karabakh; some irredentism by Armenians living in southern Georgia; traditional demands on former Armenian lands in Turkey have greatly subsided

CLIMATE:
continental, hot, and subject to drought

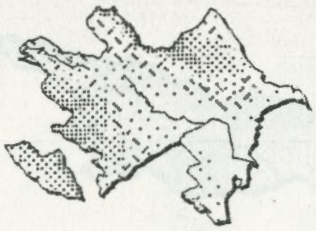
TERRAIN:
high Armenian Plateau with mountain; little forest land; fast flowing rivers; good soil in Aras River valley

NATURAL RESOURCES:
small deposits of gold, copper, molybdenum, zinc, alumina

LAND USE:
10% arable land; NA% permanent crops; NA% meadows and pastures; NA% forest and woodland; NA% other; NA% irrigated

ENVIRONMENT:
pollution of Razdan and Aras Rivers; air pollution in Yerevan

Azerbaijan
Geography



TOTAL AREA: 33,436.3 sq mi
Land area: 33,243.2 sq mi; includes the Nakhichevan' Autonomous Republic and the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast; region's autonomy was abolished by Azerbaijan Supreme Soviet on 26 November 1991

LAND BOUNDARIES: 1,251.1 miles

COASTLINE: 0.0 miles

COMPARATIVE AREA:
slightly larger than Maine

LAND BOUNDARIES:
Armenia (west) 566 km, Armenia (southwest) 221 km, Georgia 322 km, Iran (south) 432 km, Iran (southwest) 179 km, Russia 284 km, Turkey 9 km

DISPUTES:
violent and longstanding dispute with Armenia over status of Nagorno-Karabakh, lesser dispute concerns Nakhichevan'; some Azeris desire absorption of and/or unification with the ethnically Azeri portion of Iran; minor irredentist disputes along Georgia border

CLIMATE:
dry, semiarid steppe; subject to drought

TERRAIN:
large, flat Kura Lowland (much of it below sea level) with Great Caucasus Mountains to the north, Karabakh Upland in west; Baku lies on Apsheron Peninsula that juts into Caspian Sea

NATURAL RESOURCES:
petroleum, natural gas, iron ore, nonferrous metals, alumina

LAND USE:
NA% arable land; NA% permanent crops; NA% meadows and pastures; NA% forest and woodland; NA% other; includes 70% of cultivated land irrigated (1.2 million hectares)

ENVIRONMENT:
local scientists consider Apsheron Peninsula, including Baku and Sumgait, and the Caspian Sea to be most ecologically devastated area in the world because of severe air and water pollution

Belarus
Geography

TOTAL AREA: 80,154.4 sq mi
Land area: 80,154.4 sq mi

LAND BOUNDARIES: 1,925.4 miles

COASTLINE: 0.0 miles

COMPARATIVE AREA:
slightly smaller than Kansas

LAND BOUNDARIES:
Latvia 141 km, Lithuania 502 km, Poland 605 km, Russia 959 km, Ukraine 891 km

DISPUTES:
none

CLIMATE:
mild and moist; transitional between continental and maritime

TERRAIN:
generally flat and contains much marshland

NATURAL RESOURCES:
forest land and peat deposits

LAND USE:
arable land NA%; permanent crops NA%; meadows and pastures NA%; forest and woodland NA%; other NA%; includes irrigated NA%

ENVIRONMENT:
southern part of Belarus highly contaminated with fallout from 1986 nuclear reactor accident at Chernobyl'

NOTE:
landlocked

Azerbaijan
Geography

NOTE:
landlocked; major polluters are oil, gas, and chemical

Estonia
Geography

TOTAL AREA: 17,413.1 sq mi
Land area: 16,679.5 sq mi; (includes 1,520 islands in the Baltic Sea)

LAND BOUNDARIES: 346.2 miles

COASTLINE: 865.8 miles

COMPARATIVE AREA:
slightly larger than New Hampshire and Vermont combined

LAND BOUNDARIES:
Latvia 267 km, Russia 290 km

DISPUTES:
international small border strips along the northern (Narva) and southern (Petseri) sections of eastern border with Russia ceded to Russia in 1945 by the Estonian SSR

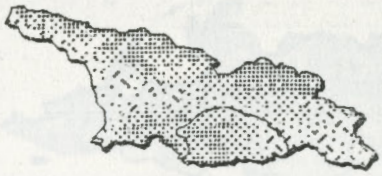
CLIMATE:
maritime, wet, moderate winters

TERRAIN:
marshy, lowlands

NATURAL RESOURCES:
shale oil, peat, phosphorite, amber

LAND USE:
22% arable land; NA% permanent crops; 11% meadows and pastures; 31% forest and woodland; 21% other; includes NA% irrigated; 15% swamps and lakes

Georgia
Geography



TOTAL AREA: 26,911.2 sq mi
Land area: 26,911.2 sq mi

LAND BOUNDARIES: 908.0 miles

COASTLINE: 192.7 miles

COMPARATIVE AREA:
slightly larger than South Carolina

LAND BOUNDARIES:
Armenia 164 km, Azerbaijan 322 km, Russia 723 km, Turkey 252 km

DISPUTES:
none

CLIMATE:
warm and pleasant; Mediterranean-like on Black Sea coast

TERRAIN:
largely mountainous with Great Caucasus Mountains in the north and Lesser Caucasus Mountains in the south; Colchis lowland opens Colchis lowland opens to the Black Sea in the west; Kura River Basin in the east; good soils in river valley flood plains, foothills of Colchis lowland

NATURAL RESOURCES:
forest lands, hydropower, manganese deposits, iron ores, copper, minor coal and oil deposits; coastal climate and soils allow for important tea and citrus growth

LAND USE:
NA% arable land; NA% permanent crops; NA% meadows and pastures; NA% forest and woodland; NA% other; includes 200,000 hectares irrigated

ENVIRONMENT:
air pollution, particularly in Rustavi; heavy pollution of Kura

Kazakhstan
Geography

TOTAL AREA: 1,049,149.5 sq mi
Land area: 1,030,809.8 sq mi

LAND BOUNDARIES: 7,465.5 miles

COASTLINE: 0.0 miles

COMPARATIVE AREA:
slightly less than four times the size of Texas

LAND BOUNDARIES:
China 1,533 km, Kyrgyzstan 1,051 km, Russia 6,846 km, Turkmenistan 379 km, Uzbekistan 2,203 km

DISPUTES:
none

CLIMATE:
dry continental, about half is desert

TERRAIN:
extends from the Volga to the Altai mountains and from the plains in western Siberia to oasis and desert in Central Asia

NATURAL RESOURCES:
petroleum, coal, iron, manganese, chrome, nickel, cobalt, copper, molybdenum, lead, zinc, bauxite, gold, uranium, iron

LAND USE:
NA% arable land; NA% permanent crops; NA% meadows and pastures; NA% forest and woodland; NA% other; includes NA% irrigated

ENVIRONMENT:
drying up of Aral Sea is causing increased concentrations of chemical pesticides and natural salts; industrial pollution

NOTE:
landlocked, Kazakhstan does border the Aral Sea (1,015 km) and the Caspian Sea (1,894 km)

Moldova
Geography

TOTAL AREA: 13,011.6 sq mi
Land area: 13,011.6 sq mi

LAND BOUNDARIES: 863.3 miles

COASTLINE: 0.0 miles

COMPARATIVE AREA:
slightly more than twice the size of Hawaii

LAND BOUNDARIES:
Romania 450 km, Ukraine 939 km

DISPUTES:
potential dispute with Ukraine over former southern Bessarabian areas; northern Bukovina ceded to Ukraine upon Moldova's incorporation into former USSR; internal with ethnic Russians in the Trans-Dnestr and Gagauz Muslims in the South

CLIMATE:
mild winters, warm summers

TERRAIN:
rolling ~~steppe, gradual slope~~ south to Black Sea

NATURAL RESOURCES:
lignite, phosphorites, gypsum

LAND USE:
NA% arable land; NA% permanent crops; NA% meadows and pastures; NA% forest and woodland; NA% other; includes NA% irrigated

Russia
Geography

TOTAL AREA: 6,592,734.7 sq mi
Land area: 6,562,078.4 sq mi

LAND BOUNDARIES: 12,516.5 miles

COASTLINE: 23,401.5 miles

COMPARATIVE AREA:
slightly more than 1.8 times the size of the US

LAND BOUNDARIES:
Azerbaijan 284 km, Belarus 959 km, China (southeast) 3,605 km, China (south) 40 km, Estonia 290 km, Finland 1,313 km, Georgia 723 km, Kazakhstan 6,846 km, North Korea 19 km, Latvia 217 km, Lithuania (Kaliningrad Oblast) 227 km, Mongolia 3,441 km, Norway 167 km, Poland (Kaliningrad Oblast) 432 km, Ukraine 1,576 km

DISPUTES:
inherited disputes from former USSR including: sections of the boundary with China, a section of the boundary with Tajikistan; boundary with Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia; Etorofu, Kunashiri, and Shikotan Islands and the the Habomai Island group occupied by the Soviet Union in 1945, claimed by Japan; maritime dispute with Norway over portion of the Barents Sea; has made no territorial claim in Antarctica (but has reserved the right to do so) and does not recognize the claims of any other nation

CLIMATE:
ranges from steppes in the south through humid continental in much of European Russia; subarctic in Siberia to tundra climate in the polar north; winters vary from cool along Black Sea coast to frigid in Siberia; summers vary from warm in the steppes to cool along Arctic coast

TERRAIN:
broad plain with low hills west Urals; vast coniferous forest and tundra in Siberia; uplands and mountains along southern border regions

NATURAL RESOURCES:
wide natural resource base including major deposits of oil, natural gas, coal, and many strategic minerals; timber; note - formidable obstacles of climate, terrain, and distance hinder exploitation of natural resources

LAND USE:
NA% arable land; NA% permanent crops, NA% meadows and pastures; NA% forest and woodland; NA% other; includes NA% irrigated

ENVIRONMENT:
despite its size, only a small percentage of land is arable and much is too far north; permafrost over much of Siberia is a major impediment to development; catastrophic pollution of land, air, water, including both inland waterways and sea coasts

NOTE:
largest country in the world in terms of area but unfavorably located in relation to major sea lanes of the world

Uzbekistan
Geography

TOTAL AREA: 172,741.1 sq mi
Land area: 164,246.9 sq mi

LAND BOUNDARIES: 3,866.4 miles

COASTLINE: 0.0 miles

COMPARATIVE AREA:
slightly larger than California

LAND BOUNDARIES:
Afghanistan 137 km, Kazakhstan 2,203 km, Kyrgyzstan 1,099 km, Tajikistan 1,161 km, Turkmenistan 1,621 km

DISPUTES:
none

CLIMATE:
mostly mid latitude desert; semiarid grassland in east

TERRAIN:
mostly flat-to-rolling sandy desert with dunes; Fergana valley in east surrounded by mountainous Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan; shrinking Aral Sea in west

NATURAL RESOURCES:
natural gas, petroleum, coal, gold, uranium, silver, copper, lead and zinc, tungsten, molybdenum

LAND USE:
NA% arable land; NA% permanent crops; NA% meadows and pastures; NA% forest and woodland; NA% other; includes NA% irrigated

ENVIRONMENT:
drying up of the Aral Sea is resulting in growing concentrations of chemical pesticides and natural salts

NOTE:
landlocked, Uzbekistan does border the Aral Sea (420 km)

UNIT OUTLINE — Russia and the Former Soviet Republics

I. **Unit Objectives:** Students will be able to:

A. **Knowledge Level**

1. describe the relative location of Russia and the former Soviet Union on a word map. (I)
2. define the main vocabulary words contained in the reading and use each in a complete sentence that demonstrates its meaning. (I-IV)
3. arrange the major events of Russian-Soviet history on a timeline and list the dates for each. (I)
4. locate and identify each of the 15 new countries of this region on an outline map. (II)
5. identify the 11 members of the CIS on the world map. (IV)
6. identify and arrange the events leading to the collapse of the Soviet Union on a timeline. List the dates for each. (I & IV)
7. identify and explain the basic responsibilities of any government. (IV)

B. **Comprehension Level**

1. explain the importance of the major events and personalities in Russian-Soviet history. (I)
2. explain the reasons for the tremendous ethnic diversity of the former Soviet Union. (II)
3. explain the origins and purpose of the Commonwealth of Independent States. (IV)
4. describe how the Communist Party ruled the Soviet Union and identify the ways in which it limited the individual freedom of its people. (IV)
5. explain the problems created when more than one major ethnic group lives within the borders of the same country. (II)
6. explain the role of nuclear weapons in a nation's defense and the concept of "deterrence." (IV)

C. **Application Level**

1. identify the basic components of a newspaper article and obtain information related to current issues from newspaper stories about the former Soviet Union. (III)

D. **Analysis Level**

1. explain several examples of how past events in Soviet history have shaped the current situation in Russia and the former republics. (I-IV)

2. identify the causes and effects of nationalism and ethnic fighting in the former Soviet Union. (II)
3. identify the major faults of the communist economic system and explain how they helped bring down the Soviet Union. (III)
4. identify and describe the major economic problems and challenges that have accompanied the attempted transition from communism to capitalism. (III)
5. identify the important issues related to the Russian government and the future of democratic reforms. (IV)
6. explain the current problems related to nuclear weapons, environmental damage, and the military in Russia and the former republics. (III & IV)
7. explain why Russia is the most influential country in this region. (II-IV)
8. describe the importance of interdependence and trade to a country. (III & IV)
9. explain the stresses that defense spending places on the economy of a country and relate this to the role that the arms race played in weakening the economy of the Soviet Union. (III & IV)
10. explain why it is advantageous for smaller/weaker nations to ally themselves with more powerful nations. Relate this to the polarization of the Cold War era. (IV)
11. describe the costs of war to both winners and losers in any conflict. (IV)

E. **Synthesis Level**

1. create two political cartoons that express opinions about the past or current economic problems in Russia or the other former republics. (III)
2. experience the difficulty of compromising and negotiation between groups with different goals. (II)
3. experience how a democratic legislature functions in a parliamentary system by role-playing the law makers representing the members of an ethnic group living within a larger country. (IV)

F. **Evaluation Level**

1. make predictions concerning the future of Russia and the former Soviet republics. (I-IV)
2. describe how future events in Russia could affect the entire world. (I-IV)

II. **Materials**: To teach this unit I will need:

A. **Section I — The History**

1. copies of Section I readings.
2. video: edited review of Russian-Soviet history.
3. timelines for student activity.
4. vocabulary and terms review crossword puzzle.
5. copies of section quiz.

B. **Section II — The People**

1. copies of Section II readings.
2. outline maps and instruction sheets for the map assignment (Russian and the Former Soviet Republics).
3. simulation instruction sheets, role descriptions, maps, record sheets, and evaluation.
4. copies of crossword puzzle review.
5. copies of section quiz.

C. **Section III — The Economy**

1. copies of the Section III readings.
2. copies of the political cartoons assignment and overhead transparencies of sample cartoons.
3. a copy of the teacher instruction sheet for the "Capitalism/Communism" activity.
4. copies of the review crossword.
5. copies of section quiz.

D. **Section IV — The Government**

1. copies of the Section IV readings.
2. copies of timelines and crossword reviews.
3. video: "The New Russian Revolution" (edited).
4. materials for simulation: record sheets, instructions, key rules, maps, hints.
5. Jeopardy review game for whole unit.
6. copies of final test.

III. **Section Timeline** (32 days/approx. 6 weeks)

A. **Section I — The History**

Day 1 - Read text together in class and discuss. Assign vocabulary words and review crossword.
Day 2 - Complete timelines in class and correct.
Day 3 - Watch and discuss video on Soviet history.
Day 4 - Check vocabulary. Allow study time for quiz.
Day 5 - Take quiz and begin silent reading for next section.

B. **Section II — The People**

Day 1 - Group reading and discussion. Assign vocabulary.
Day 2 - Complete map assignments in class.
Day 3 - Begin simulation. Make introduction and groups.
Day 4 - Simulation.
Day 5 - Simulation.
Day 6 - Simulation.
Day 7 - Debriefing: discussion and evaluation of simulation.
Day 8 - Check vocabulary. Allow study time for quiz.
Day 9 - Section II quiz and silent reading of next section.

C. **Section III — The Economy**

Day 1 - Group reading and discussion. Assign vocabulary.
Day 2 - Activity: "Capitalism/Communism."
Day 3 - Introduce political cartoons assignment.
Day 4 - Work time for cartoon assignment.
Day 5 - Video: "Chernobyl Disaster" and discussion.
Day 6 - Check vocabulary and allow study time.
Day 7 - Section III quiz.

D. **Section IV — The Government**

Day 1 - Group reading and assign vocabulary.
Day 2 - Work on timelines and discuss.
Day 3 - Video: "The Second Russian Revolution" and discussion.
Day 4 - Introduce simulation "Guns and Butter."
Day 5 - Simulation.
Day 6 - Simulation.
Day 7 - Simulation.
Day 8 - Finish simulation, debrief and evaluate.
Day 9 - Check vocabulary. Allow study time.
Day 10 -Jeopardy review.
Day 11 -Unit test (Sections I-IV and map).

IV. Teaching Techniques

A. Group Reading

Instead of giving notes or lecturing on the content of the reading, I will have the students read the handouts together in class. A different student will read each section. We will pause for further discussion or questions when needed.

The advantage of this method is that it will give me a chance to discuss the topics that might be harder for the students to understand when they are reading on their own. It will also increase the number of students who will complete the reading since many would not do it if left entirely on their own.

B. Cooperative Work

I frequently use cooperative learning groups for in-class activities, projects, and simulations. Students will be working in pairs on several of the assignments for this unit (maps, timelines, project). When working with someone else, students have the opportunity to ask questions and solve problems together. It also helps to improve communication and other social skills.

Small groups will be formed for both simulation games. Students will need to well work together in order to be competitive in these simulation games. Groups are selected in such a way as to include a "balance" of personality types and levels of ability. Part of the students' grades for the period is based on their attitude and effort in group work.

C. Simulation Games

Simulation games are a great way to get students actively involved in learning. It gives them a chance to "experience" some of the material and concepts that they are reading about.

The simulation games I have chosen for this unit are outstanding. The first game, "Multi-Ethnic Countries," will allow students to experience the tensions that can develop between different ethnic groups living and competing for resources in the same country. When finished, students should be able to compare the situations in the game to the current issues related to nationalism in Russia and the former Soviet republics.

The second game, "Guns and Butter," teaches students about the difficulty of managing the economy of a country while having to worry about defense. This game will allow students to experience aspects of the superpower rivalry and arms race of the Cold War. It will allow them to understand how overspending on defense could harm other areas of a nation's economy. Finally, it will help them understand the complex inter-relationship

between a country's economic, political, defense, and social needs.

The skills students will develop by playing these games include:

1. critical thinking
2. decision-making
3. organization/record keeping
4. communication/negotiation
5. working cooperatively in small groups

The teacher is the game organizer and must explain and interpret the rules. Once each game starts, it is largely run by the students. I have found that these kinds of activities are very enjoyable and challenging for the students.

D. **Vocabulary**

Each section of the unit includes a number of key vocabulary terms I expect the students to learn. At the beginning of each section, I will assign the students several of the words to copy into their class notebooks. Next to each term, they will do the following:

1. Write/copy the definition of the word from the unit glossary.

2. Write a complete sentence using the word. The sentence must use the word in such a way as to clearly demonstrate its meaning.

Prior to section quizzes, I will go over these words with the students in class, giving them the chance to correct their answers. The notebooks will be collected and graded when the unit is finished.

V. **Evaluation** - The letters and numbers listed in parentheses indicate the particular objectives from section I that each item is de signed to evaluate.

A. **Homework/In-Class Assignments**

1. maps (A-1,4,5)

2. timelines (A-3,6 B-1 D-1)

3. political cartoons (B-4 D-3,4,5,6 E-1 F-2)

4. worksheet: economic problems (C-1 D-4)

5. vocabulary: notebooks and crossword reviews (A-2)

B. **Simulations**

1. Evaluation/question forms will be filled out by groups and discussed during the debriefings.
2. Quiz questions: Several questions on the section quizzes and unit test will relate to the simulations.
3. Participation in all activities will be graded and counted toward the period's participation grade.

(A-7, B-2,5,6 D-2,8,9,10,11 E-2,3)

C. **Tests/Quizzes**

1. Section quizzes will include multiple choice, vocabulary, map, and short essay questions.
2. The final unit test will focus on material from the last section, but will include questions over the whole unit.

(All objectives)

PERSONAL VITA

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Work Experience: Substitute Teacher; October 1987 - May 1989; Taught various subjects at a variety of grade levels in the South Bend Community School Corporation.

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